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# The Voice, Fall 2014: Volume 60, Issue 1

Dordt College

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# Voice

THE OF DORDT COLLEGE

FALL 2014  
VOLUME 60 | ISSUE 1 OF 3

## DOING SCIENCE

Alumni, students, and faculty are putting their scientific knowledge to work in many areas. From the operating room to a farm in Zambia to a large construction site, this issue highlights some of the ways we are living and working in today's world.



# Leading Off

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WITH THE PRESIDENT

## DISCIPLING THE NEXT GENERATION

In the two years that I've been president, I've met with many alumni and heard their stories of God's calling, shaping, and faithfulness in their lives. Stories by early and recent graduates inspire me to ensure that Dordt College continues to offer seriously Christian education for serious Christians.



The stories don't all describe a bed of roses, but Dordt graduates consistently say that their understanding and hope in God's "big story" in Scripture of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration, which pivots on Christ's life, death, resurrection, and reign has enabled them to cope and thrive in their various journeys.

I recall one conversation with two alumnae, both mothers—one with children ranging from post-college through high school age, the other with children starting elementary school. The elder of the two asked me to encourage her youngest son to take a serious look at Dordt. Her older children had graduated from public universities, and she felt something was missing in their college experience.

As we talked, she leaned toward the younger mother and said, "Start talking to your kids early about the importance of Christian colleges. We didn't, and I'm afraid it is too late now."

Dordt College is part of a larger Christian community—the church. As Q&A 54 of the Heidelberg Catechism notes regarding our belief about the church—"I believe that the Son of God through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith." The mission of Dordt College is to equip people for effective participation in that community.

The college leadership team regularly prays together for God to work in the hearts and minds of prospective students. The college admissions staff works diligently to introduce Dordt College to thousands of high school students each year. I know the Holy Spirit works year after year to guide students to our campus.

My encouragement to you—as parents and grandparents of young people today—is never miss a chance to connect the truths of Scripture to the educational journey of the students in your sphere of influence. It's discipleship, and it's helping to build the church for Christ's kingdom purposes.



DR. ERIK HOEKSTRA

**Voice**  
THE OF DORDT COLLEGE

FALL 2014

VOLUME 60 | ISSUE 1

The *Voice*, an outreach of Dordt College, is sent to you as alumni and friends of Christian higher education. The *Voice* is published three times each year to share information about the programs, activities, and people at Dordt College.

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### Our Mission

As an institution of higher education committed to a Reformed Christian perspective, Dordt College equips students, alumni, and the broader community to work effectively toward Christ-centered renewal in all aspects of contemporary life.

### On the Cover

The cover combines separate photos of Verlyn (left) and Brent (right) Nykamp, each in their own operating rooms at Sioux Falls Sanford Health and at Orange City Area Health Center (see page 20).  
*Photo by Doug Burg*





## THE END IS IN SIGHT

Getting the Science and Technology Center addition up and running this fall has taken time and energy. Professors had to move years of professional paraphernalia; construction workers had to finish countless details; inspectors with beeping devices had to test everything; the art committee had to find new art to hang; instructors had to learn to use new technology.



It's been worth the effort.

"I love the light, the space, and the design of the new building. The building is beautiful and encourages collaborative learning," says Aziel Brito Macin, a biology and chemistry secondary education major.

Engineering major Tayler Hoekstra likes the fact the new building connects most classrooms, that students gather on the new "hangout steps" in the lobby to catch up via their electronic devices or collaborate on homework, that professors are easier to find for asking questions, and that the "cool" new marker boards and tables encourage group study and informal learning.

The Completion Phase, a renovation of the old building, is poised to begin. We're eager to finish the project and carry on a long Dordt tradition: sending out excellent science majors prepared to serve in God's world.

*Sally Jongsma*

SALLY JONGSMA, EDITOR

## CRISIS SIMULATION ON CAMPUS

In October, first responders from the area took part in a crisis simulation exercise on Dordt's campus. After a mock fire in East Hall and a mock shooter scenario in the Science and Technology Center, fire department, police, EMTs, and campus personnel met to discuss what they'd learned.

### NEWS

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**7** Scores of unpublished compositions by Dale Grotenhuis are now available online free of charge through Dordt's Digital Collections archive.

**9** Digital media students got a jump start in their profession this summer by creating curriculum videos for a client.

### FEATURES

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### ALUMNI

**32** Defender Days drew hundreds of parents and alumni to campus for a busy and fun-filled weekend of games, concerts, theatre, dinners, and more.



**33** This year's distinguished alumni, James C. Schaap ('70), Merl Alons ('59), and Mike Adams ('94), were honored at the newly named annual Defender Nation Dinner.





# READING NONFICTION IMPROVES LITERACY

When Education Professor Gwen Marra proposed to her doctoral dissertation committee members that she study whether reading fiction or nonfiction made a difference in vocabulary development in preschoolers, they agreed but weren't overly enthusiastic. But Marra, whose experience is in literacy and reading, moved ahead.

Today, based on the work she did with the assistance of some of her Dordt education students, they are much more enthusiastic, and Marra is presenting the results of her research at reading and literacy conferences.

Working with a local preschool, Marra found that, over a six-week period, the vocabularies of a class of preschoolers who were read non-fiction improved significantly more than that of a class who were read fiction.

Marra suspects it is partly because in non-fiction texts, a word is more often further explained by its context while a fictional

story may use a word and move on more quickly, carried along by the story line. Studies show that 77 percent of books read to young children fall into the fiction category.

In Marra's study, the teacher encouraged children in both classes to interact with her during the reading, inviting questions and comments. She believes this strategy improved all of her results.

Several Dordt education students and a colleague played a valuable role in Marra's study. Members of Dr. Kathleen VanTol's assessment class helped develop the pre- and post-reading vocabulary test. Taking

the set of words selected by Marra that were used repeatedly in readings over six weeks, they compiled sets of photos that would show whether the preschoolers understood the word. The students also did one-on-one testing of the children before and after the stories were read and helped compile the results.

Education majors loved the hands-on work, and Marra definitely will be emphasizing more non-fiction books in her literacy and early education classes.

SALLY JONGSMA

Dr. Gwen Marra spends time each week at Stepping Stones Preschool, a private, faith-based preschool operated by Dordt College and serving families in Sioux Center and the surrounding communities.

# ENGINEERING CLUB SHOWS ITS COLORS IN COMPETITION

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Club hosted a recycling competition for Dordt students during the month of September. The competition encouraged students to collaborate as halls and apartments to collect their recycling for two weeks and then bring it to a drop-off location for weighing. The hall with the most recycling won an ice cream party, and the winning apartment residents won a pizza party.

Jonathan De Graaf, the president of the ASCE student chapter at Dordt, explains, "The goal of the competition is to promote increased recycling among students at Dordt. Recycling is one way students can be stewards of God's creation."



COURTNEY DE WOLDE (17)

In addition to this competition, ASCE also organizes the Concrete Canoe Club, sponsors several civil engineering speakers each semester, and facilitates other activities that bring underclass and upperclass civil engineers together.

ELIZABETH RILEY (15)

## VANDER WERFF NAMED OUTSTANDING ADVISOR

Dordt College engineering professor Justin Vander Werff has been awarded Outstanding Faculty Advisor by Region 7 of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). Region 7 ASCE sections from Iowa, Missouri, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Wyoming, and Colorado.



Vander Werff

But, Vander Werff believes the award says more about Dordt students than it does about him.

"This speaks to what our students are doing in ASCE," he says noting that students are involved heavily in the society, making connections, participating in events, and attending conferences and meetings. Vander Werff is also thankful for the contributions of engineering professor Joel Sikkema, who has been serving as co-advisor.

Vander Werff emphasizes that his role is "advisor, not leader." "The faculty advisor shouldn't be the energy of the club. As new people cycle through, I try to be the 'memory bank' and counsel the new students, helping them learn from those who have graduated."

His students, who nominated him for the award, say that he is quick to help, offers reliable support, and demonstrates a Christian approach to engineering.

"Professor Vander Werff always puts his students first," said civil and environmental engineering student Emily Riühl. "He's enhanced my own college career by providing great advice when needed and by showing me what it means for your faith to impact your work as an engineer."

SARAH VANDER PLAATS (05)

## Faculty Bits

Chemistry Professor **Dr. Channon Visscher** gave a presentation at the Goldschmidt Conference held in Sacramento, California, in June, on a previously published collaborative paper titled "Compositional Trends in the Atmospheres of Hot Neptunes."

Political Science Professor **Dr. Jeff Taylor** presented a paper titled "Politics for Place: An Introduction to American Decentralism" at the annual meeting of Front Porch Republic in September at the University of Louisville in Kentucky.



Education Professor **Dr. Gwen Marra** presented a workshop at the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children conference in September. The presentation was titled "Using Dialogic Discussions to Boost Student Vocabulary."

The North American edition of Economics Professor **Dr. Jan Van Vliet's** 2013 UK book: *The Rise of Reformed System: The Intellectual Heritage of William Ames* was recently released.



History Professor **Dr. Scott Culpepper** presented a paper at the Second Annual Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Conference at St. Louis University in June titled "Long May She Reign: Portrayals and Interpretations of Mary, Queen of Scots, in Popular Media." He also presented a paper at the Conference on Faith and History at Pepperdine University titled "Facing Christian America's Sacred Ire: Can Christian Historians Successfully Bridge the Gap between Professional Integrity and Populist Constituency?"

Mathematics Professor **Valorie Zonnefeld** gave two presentations at the 2014 Heartland Christian Education Conference: "Game Time: Choosing Apps" and "Games that Align to the Common Core."





# MIEDEMA RETURNS WITH PH.D. AND NEW EXPERTISE

Dr. Bradley Miedema has long been interested in chamber music. In choosing a focus for his doctoral work, he found himself drawn to learning more about the harmonie tradition of the late 18th and early 19th century, in part because many of the arrangements written for court performances of that time are still part of chamber music repertoire today. Miedema, who conducts Dordt's Chamber Orchestra, as well as Concert Band and Campus-Community Band, says many of these arrangements were actually transcriptions of substantial operatic works.



Miedema

"They became a way of disseminating new works to the public before they were performed on stage," he says.

Miedema traced the development of the harmonie tradition and then decided to create a work in this tradition himself. He wrote a transcription of a work by Leoš Janáček, *Suite for Strings*. Miedema's composition, *Suite for Winds*, had its debut performance last spring at North Dakota State University, where Miedema was completing his D.M.A.

"It changed my perception of transcriptions as a lesser skill," he says. He now sees them as a way to make compositions fresh and new.

Miedema says his year of study and writing was an intensely sharpening experience as he collaborated with professors on conducting, performed on French horn, and relived the student experience. He knows it will make him a better conductor, teacher, and musician.



JAMIN VER VELDE (99)

A donated manuscript dating from about 1500 will soon be on display in a double-sided frame in the Dordt College Library. It is likely a page from a choir book used in a medieval monastery or cathedral.

## 500-YEAR-OLD MUSIC MANUSCRIPT GIVEN

Last spring, Sioux Center Resident Mrs. Robert (Caroline) Vermeer donated a framed music manuscript to the Dordt College music office. Vermeer had purchased the piece 25 years ago at a gift shop.



The manuscript is a Latin chant written on a five-line staff with *neumes*, the medieval form of notes. The music appeared to be a page from a medieval or Renaissance choir book, so Music Professor Karen DeMol decided to investigate further to determine its authenticity.

DeMol met with Dr. Robert Kendrick of the University of Chicago and Dr. Lucia Marchi of DePaul University, both specialists in medieval manuscripts, who confirmed that the donated manuscript is authentic. They told DeMol that the five-line staff suggests that the page dates from about 1500, and that the piece was likely commissioned by a rather wealthy individual, since it is written on very high quality, white parchment. Kendrick believes the manuscript is Italian.

"This manuscript is only one page from an entire book of chants. There would have been only one copy for the whole

choir, so they made it big and elaborate," explained DeMol.

The donated manuscript is part of a musical piece that would have been used at the annual mass commemorating the martyrs and sung prior to the reading of the Gospel.

The song was based on Psalm

63:11, "But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God will glory in him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced" (NIV).

"I asked students in my music history class about the value of having this manuscript at Dordt," said DeMol. Students concluded that being able to see an authentic example of historical music would make the study of music history more real.

"At Dordt, we endeavor to serve God through work and worship and music. This manuscript from 500 years ago demonstrates people doing the same thing," said DeMol. "It connects us with the historic body of believers."

"We are thankful and excited that Mrs. Vermeer chose to give this piece of music to Dordt," said DeMol.

LYDIA MARCUS '18

# GROTENHUIS MUSIC ADDED TO DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

Music brings communities together; it spreads joy; and it unites congregations in worship.

In his lifetime, former Music Professor Dale Grotenhuis shared God's blessings of music through the music he wrote. Thanks to a new online digital archive, his music can continue to do so.

Grotenhuis helped build Dordt's music department from its founding until his retirement three decades later. His choirs toured the United States and Canada, building a reputation for the young Reformed college in Sioux Center, Iowa.

"Many came to know Dordt through its choir," says Professor Karen DeMol.

Grotenhuis composed many pieces of music for Dordt choirs. Some of these pieces ended up being published by commercial publishers; some did not.

Over the years, the music department has received a calls from former Dordt

REBEKAH DYKHUIZEN ('14)



Academic libraries aren't just about books anymore. The business of learning is changing, so the library is, too, notes Library Director Sheryl Taylor. Dordt's library is shifting from relying on a traditional print collection to providing users with access to the content they need no matter the format.

students who remember singing a particular song. When they could not find it published, they contacted the music department to see if Dordt had a copy.

"Usually, we did not," said DeMol.

When Grotenhuis passed away two years ago, Mrs. Eleanor Grotenhuis, his widow, and Mrs. Joy (Gross, '86) Grotenhuis, his daughter-in-law, generously gave all of the unpublished music to Dordt.

"There were boxes and boxes of it," recounts DeMol. It had all been organized and catalogued by Joy.

The music department wanted to make this unpublished music available to the public, so they contacted Library Director Sheryl Taylor.

"After meeting with the music department, I became convinced that in addition to a physical archive of Grotenhuis's scores, it would also be important to digitally archive them to make them accessible off-campus and to a broader audience," said Taylor.

She had already been thinking about how to digitally archive other material that currently appears on Dordt's main websites, so receiving the unpublished Grotenhuis compositions came at the right time. The college now hosts a site called Digital Collections @ Dordt, an

institutional repository or digital archive that includes academic work created by Dordt faculty, staff, and students. It uses Digital Commons software used by many libraries and organizations and can be found at [digitalcollections.dordt.edu](http://digitalcollections.dordt.edu).

"In a way it's like a library catalog, but in most cases the full text of items are freely available, along with information (metadata) about the items," explained Taylor. Digital Commons software allows Dordt to make its resources more accessible to the broader Christian and global academic community. It also ensures the longterm preservation of research and unpublished work.

Taylor has linked Digital Commons to the WorldCat library catalogue, making the archived files, including the Grotenhuis collection, available worldwide. In addition, Digital Commons is search engine optimized, which increases a file's visibility online.

"This technology came just when we had a need for it," said DeMol. "Grotenhuis's goal was to serve with music, and, through Dordt's Digital Collections, his music will continue to serve by enriching choirs, singers, and worshippers," said DeMol. "I think he would be delighted."

LYDIA MARCUS ('18)

## GOING DIGITAL

The world of print communications has been changed by the existence of economical, available, media-rich content streaming through a worldwide web-based communications network. Dordt's John and Louise Hulst Library provides access to this content and is also actively building and curating a digital collection of local and unique content. The new **Digital Collections @ Dordt** website encourages scholarly communication and gives access to information both on campus and to a worldwide learning community. In addition to the Grotenhuis compositions, Digital Collections @ Dordt has uploaded faculty scholarship and Dordt publications such as the *Dordt Voice*, the *Dordt Diamond*, and the academic catalog. Nearly 75 percent of Dordt's master of education theses have been added to the system, and eventually, student work such as Kuyper Scholars Program papers, senior capstone projects, and Ideafest presentations will also be added.



# DIGITAL MEDIA STUDENTS SPENT THE SUMMER WORKING IN THEIR FIELD

Most people think of Hollywood and California when they think of video production. This summer, though, Dordt College, in the fields of Iowa, provided five students with priceless video production experience.

Mark Volkers, digital media professor at Dordt and head of Prairie Grass Productions, supervised the summer internships. Prairie Grass Productions, a production company affiliated with Dordt College, partnered with Arizona-based Glynlyon Publishing (GLP) to produce educational videos for use in GLP's online curriculum. The curriculum is used by schools, homeschool families, and educational distributors.

The five interns, Tanner Brassier, Megan Kaiser, Kaylie Ogle, Courtney Samuel, and Lance Wunderink certainly had their work cut out for them. Working 40 to 50 hours a week, each intern produced three or four educational videos, each two to three minutes. GLP sent the interns various lesson topics to choose from and let the interns decide which ones to work

on. Students had to show the significance of their topics and demonstrate how the lessons applied to real life. Topics ranged from the Pythagorean Theorem to fractions to history lessons.

Creating an educational video is a complex task.

"It was really up to the interns to come up with a script, a creative treatment of it, find people to interview who could speak intelligently about how to use the lessons in real life, film that, do all the postproduction work, including music selection and everything else, and send it back to Glynlyon," said Volkers.

While this may sound like an intimidating task, intern Megan Kaiser reflected on the many ways in which Dordt's educational

system prepared her for the experience.

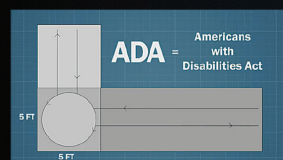
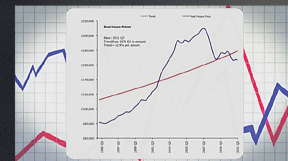
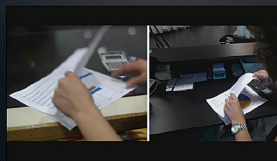
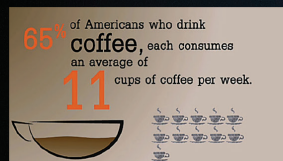
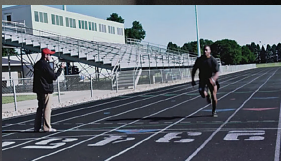
"What I have learned in digital media at Dordt prepared me for each step of preproduction, production, and postproduction. The information I learned in my core classes has really applied, because for my job I had to be familiar with different areas of study to create videos with specific subject matter. From

"This is learning at its best. Any time you can take the camera out of the classroom, students are going to have a much stronger learning experience."

— Mark Volkers

core English to core math, my learning experiences at Dordt helped me create my scripts."

The five students gleaned invaluable real-life experience not easily learned in a classroom.





"This is learning at its best," said Volkers. "Any time you can take the camera out of the classroom, students are going to have a much stronger learning experience. Any time you can jump out of class projects and meet with a client and do actual work with an actual deadline and an actual paycheck, students will be learning faster and be more focused."

Kaiser agreed with Volkers, saying, "My internship prepared me for the digital media world, but it also prepared me in many other ways: becoming comfortable with business calls, doing interviews, becoming a better and more efficient writer, and sharpening my organization skills—skills necessary in almost any area of work."

The interns completed 17 videos this summer. During the previous two summers Prairie Grass Productions employed only one student. Because the five internships were so successful, GLP and Prairie Grass

Productions are considering increasing the number of students employed during the summer of 2015.

Part of the reason this internship was so successful is tied to Dordt's location. While Dordt's rural location may be atypical for production companies, Prairie Grass Productions uses it as an advantage.

"Location matters less than it did before. I have friends doing this kind of thing in the L.A. area, but every time an opportunity comes up like this, you have 15 schools jumping on it, tons of freelance companies fighting for it, lots of private professionals fighting for it. We're the only show in town," Volkers says. "Prairie Grass has made a good name for itself, so we have people coming to us with meaningful work that we can get students involved in. We have more business than we can handle."

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JULIE JANSEN ('16)

## Faculty Bits

Business Professor **Dale Zevenbergen** was accepted to the 2014-15 class of Leadership Iowa. Primarily for business leaders,



Leadership Iowa is an issues-awareness program promoting leadership in Iowa.

Education Professor **Dave Mulder** presented a paper at the International Christian Community for Teacher Education (ICCTE) conference held at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario, in May titled "Technology-Infused Teacher Preparation: Connecting Technology and Pedagogy." In October, he presented a webinar for elementary science teachers titled "Seven Ways to Improve Science Teaching in a Self-Contained Classroom," sharing ideas for creating a sense of awe and wonder, developing students' abilities to conduct science investigations, and exploring ways to share their learning beyond the classroom walls. He has also given several presentations on using technology in the classroom.

Mathematics Professor Dr. **Mike Janssen** was one of 15 selected as 2014-15 Fellows for Project NExT (New Experiences in Teaching), a professional development program designed for new or recent Ph.D. recipients in mathematics.



History Professor Dr. **Walker Reid Cosgrove** presented a paper this summer at a Medieval and Early Modern Studies conference at Durham University in England. Cosgrove's paper was titled "Inside Guillaume Aymeric: Heretics in Southern France as the 'Unintentional Other' and the Process by which They Realized They were the 'Other'."

Education Professor Dr. **Kathleen VanTol** was appointed a member of the Elim Christian Services Outreach Board. Elim's mission is to help individuals with disabilities achieve their highest God-given potential.



# CROSSING CULTURES IN PUERTO RICO IN MAY

**W**hen language instructor Rikki Heldt began planning a three-week study abroad program, she picked Puerto Rico.

Why? Because Puerto Rico's status as a territory of the United States creates a unique cultural experience.

"You find American ways of thinking within a Latin mindset," she said. "Everywhere you look, you see that mix of cultures. From a cross-cultural perspective, that is really interesting." As an example she notes that speed limits are posted in miles per hour but distance to the next town is posted in kilometers.

Heldt took 11 students with majors ranging from business to biology. Five were Spanish minors; the other six spoke little Spanish. Some participated to fulfill a cross-cultural requirement, others to improve their Spanish-speaking skills.

Heldt wanted students to understand how American and Puerto Rican cultures compare, to ask what life is like where the two cultures mix, and to ask each other how their disciplines related to one another. To prepare for the program, students had to pick a research topic in their major that related to Puerto Rico.



**Professor Rikki Heldt took her students to Puerto Rico to live in the culture.**

"We had many good discussions about government, economics, biology, education, and other topics," said Kaira Krommendyk, a biology major. "We got to know the island on a deeper level, while building community with each other and discussing the major issues that face the people of Puerto Rico."

The first stop on the program was San Juan, where students were immediately pushed outside their comfort zones.

"Students would say, 'We're going to eat there? That's a hole in the wall.' I'd say, 'That's a hole in the wall where the locals eat,'" said Heldt.

In San Juan, the group stayed in a hostel, purchased their groceries at the market, and cooked most of their meals together in a rundown kitchen. "You won't find cultural experiences like these anywhere else," said Heldt. Students saw firsthand the cultural differences between the United States and Puerto Rico.

"In the Latin American mindset, the way you dress—especially for guys—shave, have your eyebrows plucked are self-esteem issues. Shavings with little designs on the side mean something entirely different than they do in the United States," said Heldt.

Hannah Van Maanen, a biology education major, appreciated the culture shock.

"I came face-to-face with Spanish culture and had no choice but to be immersed in it," said Van Maanen. "Professor Heldt helped us analyze how culture impacted worldview and everyday actions, and try to see it from a Puerto Rican perspective."

Students learned Puerto Rican history on guided tours in San Juan. But the guides primarily spoke in Spanish, so Heldt put her Spanish-speaking students' abilities to the test by pairing them with the





guides to translate for the non-Spanish speakers.

"The students found that after a half-hour they were tired. Even when you've studied Spanish for many years, the spoken context is different from that of the classroom," she said.

The second week was spent in Ponce. They stayed in family-owned hotels near the city center and had access to local markets and shops. They also visited a children's home and a handicapped facility.

The final week in Panguera allowed students to experience the biodiversity of Puerto Rico.

"Puerto Rico has a bioluminescent bay and in the evening you see dinoflagellates in the water," said Heldt. "You can have the science explained, but you're not going to truly understand until you're in the water in the dark and everything starts sparkling around you. You become a human glow stick. You can't take pictures of that."

"I think the biggest thing that I learned was how diverse the earth really is," said biology major Ben Korver. "It is easy to go on the computer and look up pictures of a tropical rainforest or a coral reef but to be surrounded by the sights, smells, and sounds is an entirely different experience."

"It is easy to . . . look up pictures of a tropical rainforest or a coral reef but to be surrounded by the sights, smells, and sounds is an entirely different experience."

—Ben Korver ('15)

After the group returned to the United States, Heldt's students reflected on how their experiences had changed them.

"For some, it was as easy as, I hate new foods and I'm a really picky eater, but now it doesn't matter what they put in front of me, I'm at least going to try," said Heldt. Others realized they could be more independent and decided they did not need to call home every day."

"They were up for anything," she said. "They were open-eyed and ready to be amazed by what else is out there."

SARAH MOSS('10)

KAYTRISCH



The utility vehicle designed and built by this team of senior engineers will help students at Northrise University's farm in Ndola, Zambia, carry bananas out of the field to be loaded on a large transport truck that can take them to market.

## DORDT COLLEGE SENIOR DESIGN VEHICLE SHIPPED TO AFRICA

The four-wheeled, durable utility vehicle that Dordt College senior engineering students designed and constructed for use on Northrise University's Northrise Farm in Ndola, Zambia, was shipped to Africa this summer. By mid October it had reached Africa and was on its way to Zambia.

Dordt College has been a partner with Northrise for more than five years, helping the university find ways to become more self-sustainable. This vehicle will help Northrise develop its agriculture program, which currently has only one tractor and one large truck for transporting goods and materials. The Dordt senior engineering students built a vehicle that could travel over somewhat rough terrain, carry 1,500 pounds, and drive up to 17 miles per hour.

Building the vehicle was only half the cost, though. Shipping it cost \$5,000. So earlier this year, engineering students put out a request to engineering alumni for donations to a crowdfunding campaign to ship the vehicle to Zambia. They received a strong response, accepting more than \$5,000.

You can learn more about Northrise Farms at [www.northrise.org/northrise-farms](http://www.northrise.org/northrise-farms)



# CROPS, NITRATES, WATER: DORDT AND CITY TEAM UP

"Sioux Center has a history of trying to find solutions to problems before we are forced to," says Sioux Center City Engineer Matt Van Schouwen ('99).

That's why he is pleased with the research of two Dordt professors and a local farmer on how different cropping systems affect the nitrate levels in the soil around Sioux Center's wells.

The city of Sioux Center, like many communities in agricultural states like Iowa, is looking for ways to protect its water supply while maintaining maximum agricultural production. They have been working with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Source Water Protection Program (DNR SWP).

"I really commend these guys and Dordt College," says Becky Ohrtman, the DNR SWP coordinator. "Studying the environmental and economic aspects of water quality at the same time is something that needs to be done. We need this type of information sharing and the collaborative way it was done."

Over the past five years, Dr. Robert De Haan, Dr. Ron Vos, and Matt Schuiteman have received \$90,000 in grants to study nitrate levels in soil that Schuiteman farms near Sioux Center's wells. Each year, 800 six-foot deep soil samples were taken from the test site, divided into one-foot segments, and analyzed for their nitrate-nitrogen content.

"No one else that we know has tested samples from ground level to six feet down," says De Haan. Their preliminary results show significant amounts of nitrates even five and six feet down, and they show that farmers may be able

to significantly cut those amounts by changing the way they farm. The study also indicated that farmers could plant crops that would bring comparable or better economic returns while reducing the amount of nitrates in the soil and, therefore, reducing the risk of groundwater contamination.

De Haan and Vos have shared preliminary results to a variety of interested parties. City officials, leaders from the Iowa DNR, and others interested in water quality in Iowa, came to campus on September 18 to hear about the study.

"Many people seemed surprised at our results," says Vos.

De Haan and Vos were also invited to present their findings to about 15 agronomists at the local Farmer's Coop. Lead Agronomist Stan Feekes found their results surprising and helpful.

"We make nitrogen recommendations to farmers and look for information that will help us do that in ways that are environmentally sound and cost effective," Feekes says. "This research helps us feel confident in fine tuning our recommendations to .7 or .8 pounds

of nitrogen per bushel rather than the one pound per bushel we have been recommending," he says. "Farmers would love to cut their fertilizer bills while maintaining production."

Farmers Coop agronomists appreciated

"This is what we mean when we talk about offering serviceable insight. This study was designed to help agricultural communities use systems that steward creation's resources."

—Dr. Robert De Haan

what they learned about using cropping systems other than corn and soybeans.

"This study gave us ideas for recommending crops that might be good economic options for some farmers and good environmental options for the whole community," Feekes says.

Agricultural states like Iowa know that something needs to change to keep contaminants out of drinking water, says De Haan. Many wells are relatively shallow and are easily contaminated by nitrates, a water soluble chemically active form of nitrogen that results from high production agriculture. Sioux Center's wells need to be managed carefully to keep contamination below levels considered dangerous for babies





PHOTO SUBMITTED



Each fall, over the course of several weeks, 800 tubes were drilled six feet into the ground on the Schuiteman farm to obtain the soil samples needed to test nitrate levels.

and pregnant women. Iowa's voluntary SWP program supports community groundwater testing projects and educates citizens and farmers about the dangers of high-nitrate drinking water contamination, like blue baby syndrome, and ways to prevent contamination.

A variety of people and organizations are asking for the results of the study, but hours of analysis need to be done to create a comprehensive statistical report on the five years of data collected. Still, some of the differences in results are so evident that they can be useful immediately, say De Haan and Vos.

"With rivers on each side and 28 million acres of corn and soybeans, Iowa is in the bull's eye for the EPA's nutrient reduction program, and cities and farmers are looking for help," says De Haan. "Nutrient" refers to nitrogen, so nutrient reduction means reducing the nitrates produced by nitrogen applications by farmers.

"This is what we mean when we talk about offering serviceable insight," he adds. "This study was designed to help agricultural communities use systems that steward creation's resources. We're

trying to give both our students and our communities practical information that will help them critically evaluate how things could and should be. We're saying, 'Here are some options to think about and here is what happens scientifically and economically with each.'"

That's something Van Schouwen appreciates. To him, the study has significant educational value as well.

"I'm not sure the general public knows much about what nitrates are and why we should be concerned about them," he says. "Neither the city nor the farmer wants to give up production on high quality land, but I think this offers win-win solutions for everyone."

Feekes, whose organization's slogan is "The High Road to High Yield," says agriculture wants to be more environmentally friendly and more cost effective. He would like to see such studies continue.

The DNR's Ohrtman agrees. "I would like to see this research spread across the state. Robb and Ron went above and beyond the call of duty in this study." She is particularly pleased that the

study provided valuable information and avoided polarizing groups in the process.

"It strikes me that it is time to start talking with our neighbors about how our operations can assist each other," says Schuiteman in a DNR publication. Van Schouwen adds, "Once landowners are provided with viable options, we trust choices will be made that work for everyone."

SALLY JONGSMA

## VARIED RESULTS

De Haan, Vos, and Schuiteman planted and evaluated four cropping systems on the land around Sioux Center's wells. The level of residual nitrates in the soil in the fall varied widely.

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Continuous Corn</b><br>(seeded with a winter rye cover crop) | <b>142</b> pounds of nitrate/acre |
| <b>Grass Hay</b> (no nitrogen fertilizer was applied)           | <b>27</b> pounds/acre             |
| <b>Corn and Oats/Alfalfa</b> (rotated)                          | average of <b>67</b> pounds/acre  |
| <b>Corn and Soybean/winter wheat</b> (rotated)                  | average of <b>92</b> pounds/acre  |

For a detailed description of the preliminary report go to [www.igwa.org/docs.ashx?id=151760](http://www.igwa.org/docs.ashx?id=151760)





# Soundings

A STUDENT REFLECTION

## "Thanks for teaching me . . . "

You're probably wondering "How did this kid find Dordt?"

I first came across Dordt through the internet. I admit, I first stared at the sentence "Find your place in God's world" with a certain aversion. It did not say anything about how my education at this college could help me achieve my personal goals. I closed the website and continued looking at other schools.



How I actually ended up here is another story, but tonight I want to talk about the sentence I read on the website. I want to describe to you, dear donors, the transformation that I have gone through in the past two years.

I left home with fear, not only because I was leaving my country and family and starting a new life in an unknown place, but because I did not believe in myself. During my first semester I would start my morning thinking that I would not be able to pass all of my classes, believing that I would lose my academic scholarships and be forced to return to my country by the end of freshman year. The engineering program challenged me. I spent long hours and several all-nighters doing homework and studying. I was never more mentally tired than during my first semester at Dordt. But by the end of it, the way I saw myself started to change. The discipline I acquired was having an

effect on me. Midterms proved that I was good at what I was doing, that I could succeed in a foreign academic system. When finals came, I had started to believe in myself.

I left home disappointed with the Christian community, and came to Dordt with negative expectations. I always had a complex feeling about the Christian community. I could never identify completely with it; I always felt that I was at the same time both outsider and member, observer and participant.

I was raised in the typical perfect Christian family; my parents were active in the Church; we prayed and did devotions every morning; and we attended services every Sunday. However, my dad's sexist, legalistic, and even oppressive perspective led to my parents' divorce. This haunted me throughout high school, and I came to Dordt afraid of making commitments, not only with people, but also with God.

I was always curious, however, in my Christian high school and Pentecostal Church questions were not welcome. As I grew up, I started to wonder about the premillennial beliefs of my church, its lack of commitment in society and culture, and its tendency to support the status quo. I like to believe that at an early age I already had some Reformed

insight even though I had never heard of Calvin or Kuyper or of contemporary Reformed thinkers like John Piper or James K. A. Smith. Rather than being involved in Bible study groups, worship bands, or Sunday school, I would join riots in downtown Asuncion calling for social justice and the end of a corrupt government. I would skip church on Sundays because I felt a call to volunteer in the slums and impoverished areas of my city. I was engaged in what my Church called "the secular." My church emphasizes the value of the soul. It

Thanks for helping me discover who I am in God and for changing the definition I had of myself, of God, and of Christianity.

considers that the ultimate divine calling is to evangelize, and its goal is to fill as many seats as possible in every Sunday service. It preaches the theology of prosperity in which God exists to bless us and make us happy.

You can probably imagine my surprise and excitement during my initiation to Reformed thought in Core 100 and KSP 151. I was so confused the first time Professor Dengler uttered the sentence





"God is glorified in both your salvation and damnation." I could not conceive of this view of Christianity. But unlike at home, my questions were welcomed, listened to, and considered. Slowly I started to see myself as part of the Christian community again. The doctrine of "common grace" finally ended my inner conflict of finding truth in non-Christian thinkers; Christ could reveal himself in everyone, and I did not need to feel guilty anymore for reading them. I could serve God outside of my church walls. Predestination and the covenant narrative allowed me to see that I did not have to be afraid of making commitments or becoming a hypocrite.

My relationship with God was something that he started long ago and he would be the one redeeming me and changing me. I started to identify myself with Christians like Calvin, Kuyper, Luther, Schaeffer, and Bonhoeffer. I will always be grateful to Dordt for introducing me to them, for making me feel an insider, for showing me that there is a place for curious rebels like me in God's world.

As I returned from a short trip to Chicago this summer, I met Ron, a scientist and a Christian. For four hours Ron spoke about politics, books, Jesus, Scripture, and his own personal vulnerabilities. He said one thing that stuck with me: "Juan, you need to know who you are in order to stand against evil."

To have a place in God's world is a huge responsibility, a difficult task and

it implies a war against evil. To have a place in God's world is to not live for our own plans or goals, but for his dreams for us. To have a place in God's world is about our actions today, about daily rejecting a sinful lifestyle and bringing redemption in our present context. We cannot do this if we do not start by first addressing our own identity and learning from our personal background.

Dordt College faculty, donors and students, today I want to give you thanks for believing in me when I did not trust in my ability to succeed.

Thanks for teaching me that I was created for something special, that I was chosen by God and given a task.

Thanks for teaching me that I can be an active Christian in my area of study and career.

Thanks for showing me that I am not alone and for making me feel part of the Christian tradition and community.

Thanks for allowing me to discover that Christians are not all ignorant, that I can be a Christian intellectual and academic.

Thanks for helping me discover who I am in God and for changing the definition I had of myself, of God, and of Christianity.

Every time I walk through campus, I feel blessed because I see how much the Juan that left home two years ago changed in this place. Today I see how my story is one of creation, fall, and especially

redemption because I can see how God put together pieces of me that were broken.

Donors, thank you for the generous financial package I receive every year—without it, I would not be here today. But you gave me more than financial help. In an indirect way, you shaped me, blessed me, and, more importantly, made me feel special, chosen, and able to project myself as the son of a King. You gave me something to fight for, to stand up against; you helped me see who I truly am and who I am called to be. Thanks to you today I have a feeling of certainty about my identity.

I also want you to know that this is not the speech of a single student. As I look at friends who came with me two years ago, I see how much they have also been shaped. Please, look around you. You are surrounded by warriors, by princes and princesses, by sons and daughters of a King. Thanks for allowing us to realize this.



JUAN PABLO BENITEZ GONZALEZ IS A JUNIOR ENGINEERING MAJOR FROM PARAGUAY. HE MADE THESE REMARKS AT THE SCHOLARSHIP DONOR BANQUET IN SEPTEMBER.





# STEPPING UP THE SCIENCES

In the mid 1960s, a simple two-story building with a handful of classrooms and labs for biology, chemistry, and physics became Dordt's first science building. A decade later a new engineering major required an addition with computer and electronic labs. About that same time, Dordt College added an agriculture major, leading to some renovations and, eventually, a 1990 addition that included a large lecture hall, lobby areas, more classrooms, some faculty offices, agriculture labs, and an expanded physics lab.

In May 2013, the process began that culminated in this building in which we gather today. Let's take a moment to appreciate just how much went into this project. Over 40 companies were involved in tens of thousands of hours of work over a 17-month period. Equipment ranged

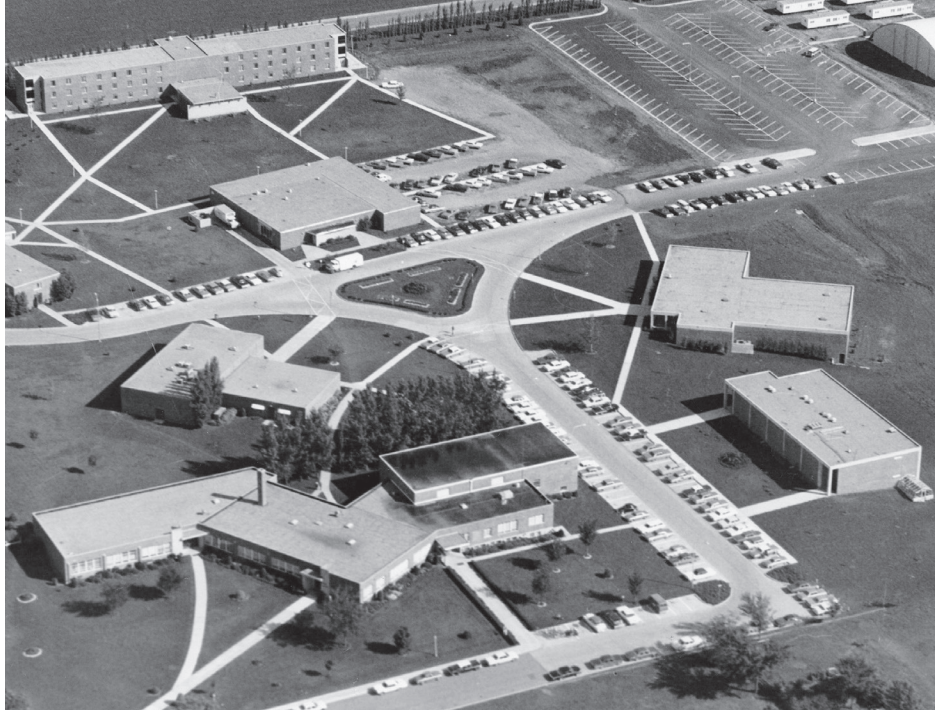
from paintbrushes, nails, and screw guns to cement trucks, excavators, cranes, and bulldozers. The result? One new building with one purpose: to equip students to continue to "work effectively toward Christ-centered renewal in all aspects of contemporary life."

The joys of this new facility are already evident. Faculty from various departments are in closer proximity to one another. One professor remarked, "It's great to be able to interact with colleagues from a wider diversity of disciplines." And we can't forget the genius of the outlet-



DOUG BURG





The original science building was the simple two-story building in the lower right corner of this aerial photograph from the 1970s. Today it extends to the east, south, and west.

equipped stairs where students gather and work together throughout the day. The engineering wing, now formally known as the Charles Adams Engineering Center, is equipped with more modern facilities, more lab space, double-monitor computer labs, and an online-streaming room. To facilitate students' familiarity with quickly improving technologies, the engineering department now has new soil, design, mechanics, wood, control systems, and thermo-fluids labs. Built such that more energy is used at nighttime than during the day, this building is a testament to sustainability.

The variety of study spaces is another highlight of this building. Already, we see increased collaboration between faculty, between students, and between faculty and students. One professor remarked, "College is about people coming together, interacting with one another and learning." Until this point, there was no informal space to do so. Now, these spaces represent an extension of learning beyond the classrooms. Last, but not least, more space means a better opportunity for increased enrollment in the sciences.

Beyond just a new physical structure, this building and its connection to the classroom building serve as a visible reminder that, though different, every sphere of learning has relevance in God's kingdom. I can say that three years

and counting at Dordt have equipped me, given me a sense of purpose and a desire to use my gifts for service in God's kingdom. My goal is to use the opportunities available to me to help remedy the healthcare situation in the rural parts of Nigeria, where I am from.

Education is a means by which we hone our skills and find out where to best use our gifts for kingdom service. This building is a renewed commitment to such education. On behalf of all students, I would like to say thank you to everyone who is a part of this commitment, and to all who played a role in making the first phase of this grand project a beautiful reality.

This morning we celebrate science, we celebrate growth, we celebrate newness, and we celebrate progress. We celebrate a place that allows us to more effectively develop our gifts—in the sciences or otherwise—for service to our Lord. To him alone be the glory.

DEBORAH TYOKOGHIR (FAR LEFT) IS A SENIOR BIOLOGY MAJOR WHO HOPES TO RETURN TO NIGERIA TO SERVE IN THE FIELD OF MEDICINE. SHE OFFERED THESE REMARKS AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NEW SCIENCE BUILDING DURING DEFENDER DAYS IN OCTOBER.

## Faculty Bits

History Professor  
**Dr. Paul Fessler**

presented "Augustine, Aquinas, and Afghanistan: Ethics of American Foreign Policy, 2001-2006" at the Reacting to the Past Game Development Conference held at Simpson College in July. He served as coordinator and leader for a Reacting to the Past Workshop, "The Patriots in New York City, 1776," at Doane College in Lincoln, Nebraska, in May, and presented the paper "Nineteenth Century German-American Entrepreneurship and Small Town America: Schell's Brewing Co. of New Ulm, Minnesota," at the Annual Symposium for the Society for German-American Studies held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, last April.



Social Work Professor **Abby Foreman** presented "Perceptions of the contract-for-services relationship: The impact of trust" at the Great Plains Political Science Association Conference in Brookings, South Dakota, in October.

Art Professor **David**

**Versluis's** five-foot steel sculpture "Boundless Spirit" was jury selected for "Expanding Borders: Olivet

Nazarene University Regional Art Exhibition," in Bourbonnais, Illinois. The 35 pieces came from entries from the six states that border Illinois and ran through the month of October. Versluis was also invited to participate in a group exhibition at The Kings University in Alberta, celebrating their 35th Anniversary. Versluis exhibited multi-color letterpress monoprints titled "Reformation" and "Redemption."



**Erica Vonk, Art Attema, and Ed Starkenburg** provided instructional resources for teachers at the Heartland Christian Educators Conference in October: "Engaging Students in Financial and Economic Literacy with Free Resources." They explained the services of Dordt's Center for Economic Education.



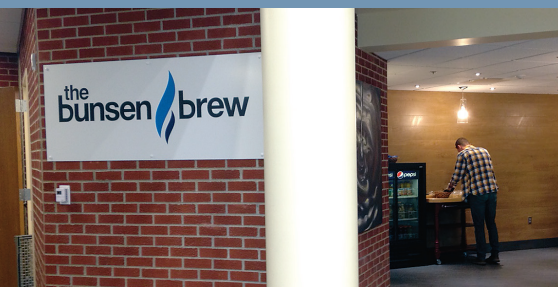
## COFFEE WITH THE SCIENCES

From the beginning, plans for the new science building included gathering places. An empty corner offered an ideal spot for a second student-run coffee shop on campus. Conveniently located next to the main lobby in the building, it helps create a welcoming atmosphere for students going to and from their classes. A campus-wide competition led to the science-inspired name, Bunsen Brew.

Art Attema, a business administration professor and faculty supervisor for the Dordt College Business Club, which runs the Bunsen Brew and the 55th Avenue Coffee Shop in the Kuyper Apartments, explains that the architects were hesitant about the ventilation needed for a coffee shop because of its location in the building. But Attema saw it as an opportunity to develop new products. While the new coffee shop is unable to bake fresh scones or serve pizza as it does at 55th Avenue, it does offer fresh cinnamon rolls from the local Casey's Bakery.

Cody Kaemingk and Grace den Hoed, the current DCBC presidents, are responsible for managing the business. Kaemingk says that he and den Hoed are "learning how to start a new business." Den Hoed adds that they're trying to "build customer loyalty for grab-and-go options during class hours."

ELIZABETH RILEY (15)



Members of the Dordt College Business Club staff the new science building coffee shop as well as the one in the Kuyper Apartments.

## NEW NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT MAJOR TAKES OFF

Dordt students who love being outdoors and want to find work after college that keeps them there might be interested in a new academic program added this fall.

The natural resources management program, the only one of its kind offered at a Christian college or university, is geared toward students who enjoy camping, bird watching, hunting, fishing, boating, or hiking and would like to turn that love into a career.



Robb DeHaan

Whether they are interested in rivers, forests, prairies, or another part of creation, students in the program learn how to help manage natural areas so that wildlife can thrive and so that people can continue to enjoy the variety of recreational activities they provide.

All natural areas are managed in one way or another today, says Dr. Robert De Haan. Working in a state or national park, for a fish and game agency, or for the department of the interior or agriculture is about managing resources and includes how land is used, how species are conserved, and how water is managed. The program will focus on the sustainability of agriculture, mining, fisheries, forestry, and tourism.

Careers in natural resource management demand a strong science background because positions with conservation organizations, fish and game departments, the DNR, and state and federal parks all require in-depth knowledge about the natural world

and how it works. Students in Dordt's program will collect data, help conduct a prescribed burn in a restored prairie, study small animal populations in local areas, experience a fish hatchery, learn how to use Geographical Information Systems (GIS), and much more. At the end of the program, students will get involved in a service learning project that will make a difference in how a wetland, woodland, or prairie is managed.

Dordt's natural resources management program carries with it all of the benefits of attending a Christian college: a Christian understanding of the world, a community intent on serving God, small classes, ready access to faculty, and the availability of good internships.

## INTERNSHIPS

Three students participated in internships related to natural resource management this summer.

**Geno Maule**, U.S. Geological Survey at the field research station in fisheries in Yankton, South Dakota

**Sarah Faber**, Sioux County Conservation Board in environmental education

**Troy Davelaar**, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks in habitat management





Rachael Day and 21 other student researchers spent a day in Washington, D.C., talking to members of the legislature about increased funding for science research. Day was paired with a postdoctoral student from the Medical College of Wisconsin and spoke with her senator, John Thune.

## STUDENT RESEARCHER TURNS LOBBYIST

Getting hands-on experience is increasingly important for all students today. For science majors this often means working in a lab. But internships and lab experiences can also lead to unexpected opportunities. Sophomore Rachael Day worked at Rush University Medical School this summer, conducting research on proteins and how specific drugs interact with them. While there, she also earned the opportunity to speak on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

Day accompanied Dordt Chemistry Professor Dr. Darren Stoub to Rush where both conducted research in the lab of Stoub's longtime research colleague. While in Chicago, Day and Stoub received a letter from a biomedical advocacy company, inviting Day to apply to be an advocate on behalf of the National Institute of Health (NIH). She participated in the competitive application process and was one of 22 students chosen from more than 80 applicants.

Stoub understands the importance of involving students in research at the onset of their college education.

"Science faculty members at Dordt think it is vastly important to get students into the lab right away so that they can develop the skills they need and are able to make positive change in the world of research," he says.



Darren Stoub

Positive change is something Day was also able to work toward during her time in D.C. Undergraduate students were paired with graduate students by geographic locations, and after a crash course on how to interact with legislators, Day was "prepared to give an elevator talk on biochemistry and molecular biology."

"The other presenters and I reported where different research was at, details about research money given to South Dakotans (my home state), why we believe there should be a budget increase, and how that would benefit research by offsetting the effects of inflation," Day said.

Day's presentations were part of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology's Capitol Hill Day, an organization of which Stoub is a member. After her time in D.C., Day reflected on how her Dordt education contributed to her opportunity: "When I was looking at colleges, I was looking for a smaller school with a strong science program because I really wanted to get to know my professors. That is something that Dordt has definitely blessed me with." She's confident that her Dordt education and the internship opportunities available to her are providing her and other students with the tools they need to bring positive change through their work in science.

JULIE JANSEN (16)

## Faculty Bits

Statistics Professor Dr. **Nathan Tintle** recently had four articles published in the BMC Proceedings (BioMed Central) and two in the Genetic Epidemiology journal. For citations go to <http://homepages.dordt.edu/ntintle/docs/cv.pdf>

Tintle gave presentations this summer at the International Genetic Epidemiology Society meeting in Vienna, Austria, and at the International conference on teaching statistics conference in Flagstaff, Arizona. He led workshops at the CAUSE (Consortium for the Advancement of Undergraduate Statistics Education) pre-JSM workshop in Boston, Massachusetts, and at the MAA-PREP workshop in San Luis Obispo, California.

Music Professor Dr. **John MacInnis** presented a paper titled "The Arts of War: Reconsidering Conflict through Interdisciplinary Artistic Collaboration" at the Verge Conference at Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia, in September. In October, he gave "Augustine's De Musica in the 21st Century Classroom" at the Augustine and the Arts conference in October at Samford University.

### New faculty

**Sara Alsum-Wassenaar**, art, M.F.A., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Tom Clark**, mathematics, Ph.D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**Steve Holtrop**, education, Ph.D., University of Iowa

**Michael Janssen**, mathematics, Ph.D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**Richard Joerger**, agriculture, Ph.D., University of Minnesota

**Ben Lappenga**, theology, Ph.D., Fuller Theological Seminary.

**Mary Beth Pollema**, education, M.Ed., Dordt College

**Benjamin Saarloos**, engineering instructor/lab systems engineer, M.S., University of Illinois-Urbana



# THE BROTHERS BEHIND THE KNIFE

Two brothers, both graduates of Dordt science programs, are surgeons who can't imagine jobs they could love more.

Verlyn Nykamp ('86) made his choice in an instant during a career week in high school. Watching a surgeon operate on a gall bladder, his immediate reaction was, "I'm doing that!" He's never looked back.

Brent Nykamp ('99) admits that his high school years were not so focused. It wasn't until he got to Dordt

College that he buckled down as a student.

"Ver always pushed me toward medicine," Brent says, but it was an EMT class that made him realize that medicine was right for him, too.

Both are quick to say that the pre-med program at Dordt prepared them exceptionally well for medical school. Verlyn, who uses the word "spectacular" to describe his preparation, says he arrived at the University of Minnesota medical school a less-than-confident farm kid among a number of Ivy League classmates. He soon found that his upper level Dordt courses made his early medical school courses feel a bit like review sessions.

Both brothers mention biology professors emeriti Dr. Al Mennega and Dr. Del Vander Zee as important to their science preparation for medical school.

"They wanted us to do well, but they certainly didn't baby us," says Brent. "And they didn't sugar coat anything."

And both brothers deeply valued the group of fellow biology majors who made college so much fun and who pushed each other to do the best they could in their studies.

Today Verlyn, a cardio-thoracic surgeon at Sanford Health in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, has performed between 4,000 and 5,000 bypass surgeries, a number of those on Dordt College employees. Brent is a general surgeon at Orange City Area Health System in Orange City, Iowa. They enjoy the hands-on nature of their work and the science they learned to do their jobs.

Verlyn always knew he wanted to work with living things and thinks he could have been as happy working the family farm if he hadn't been the second son. Today he believes there are many similarities between being a good farmer and a good surgeon. In order to be good at what you do, you need to be meticulous in applying the science you

"I'm often humbled by people's ability to cope with loss and by their resilience through tough treatment."

—Dr. Brent Nykamp ('99)

know; and you need to work very hard, and often very long hours.

"My dad lived and breathed his occupation. While I'm in the hospital, I work as hard as I can to do the best job I can," he says.

The Nykamp brothers excel at what they do. For surgeons, "a lot of it is in the hands," they say. Agile hand-eye coordination and being able to act quickly and make fast decisions were gifts that helped both brothers feel called to surgery. Brent's high school dissections were more than once used for display because of their clean precision. Verlyn remembers an attending surgeon early in his career commenting admiringly on the dexterity of his hands.

As a cardiac surgeon, Verlyn says decision-making is also a critical skill, not only at the operating table but also in assessing who he can help and who he can't. A surgeon needs to be realistic and



honest with patients, he believes.

And it's not bad to be a little impatient when it comes to helping a patient find relief or healing, Brent says. "Surgeons need to want to figure out what's wrong and fix it quickly and efficiently."

"One of the favorite parts of my work is the people I get to meet and the stories they tell," says Verlyn. They range from Native Americans on reservations to billionaires accustomed to being in charge. Earlier on the day of the interview, he had done bypass surgery on an elderly man who, several years ago, left the Northeast with his daughter, driving as far as they could before their car died. They ended up in a small South Dakota town and have lived there ever since. He never forgets that each patient is a person loved by someone, but he also realizes that to help them he needs to keep his mind clear and focus on what he knows and does. That's especially important in relatively small communities where you operate on people who know you or your family.

Brent loves the team collaboration necessary in an operating room and likes the immediate impact he can often have on someone's life and health. And he gets excited about the continually new instruments and tools available to do his work even better. Yet the thing that continually surprises him most is how unbelievably amazing the human bodies that he works on every day are.

"It never gets old. Almost every day I see or learn something new," he says.

Both Nykamp brothers say that seeing people as more than human bodies, as image bearers of God, makes a difference in how they practice as surgeons. They deal every day with people who respond very differently to medical procedures and people who deal with bad news and good news in very different ways.

"I'm often humbled by people's ability to cope with loss and by their resilience through tough treatment," says Brent.

When Verlyn and Brent get together, they don't talk surgery—at least not that often.

But they admit that once in a while it's nice to be able to share "you wouldn't believe stories" with someone who understands. And they'd both recommend both their career and their alma mater to students who think they have the interest and skills to go into health care.

"Health care is a booming business," says Verlyn, "and you can live almost anywhere you wish for a while."

For anyone willing to work hard and delay gratification through the long educational process, being a surgeon is much more than a job, the Nykamps say. It's a calling; it's rewarding; and it's exciting.

SALLY JONGSMA



## COVER STORY

Our cover photo of Verlyn and Brent Nykamp has a story behind it. The surgeon brothers helped save the life of Adjunct Art Instructor Doug Burg, also a freelance photographer who works regularly with Dordt's marketing and public relations office—and the photographer behind these images. The idea came to Burg while lying in the Sanford Heart Hospital earlier this year, recovering from a fight for his life after his lungs collapsed—first one and then the other a couple weeks later.



Doug Burg

Burg, whose lungs are damaged from a tough fight with Hantavirus 16 years ago, became ill this past January and was hospitalized in Orange City. While in the hospital, Burg's right lung collapsed. Brent, a surgeon in Orange City, was called to Burg's room to put an emergency tube in his chest after an X-ray indicated the "pneumothorax." Burg was later told that his lung looked more like a piece of broccoli than a viable organ. The following day, Brent told Burg and his wife, Lisa, that he hoped it would re-inflate and seal—if not, he said "you will get to meet my brother." At the time, they did not realize that his brother Verlyn was a skilled cardio-thoracic surgeon at Sanford Health System in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

As things turned out, Burg did get to meet Verlyn, who repaired not just the right lung, but also the left one which collapsed during a subsequent episode. Although the road to recovery was a long and difficult one, Burg is extremely thankful to both brothers for their skill and for the care they gave him.

"These guys are exemplary examples of what I've come to know and appreciate about Dordt College people," he says. He'll be thankful for their "humble confidence" and for their skillfully trained hands and minds for the rest of his life.



# STUDENTS START A BEEKEEPING CLUB

Crystal Elenbaas, a senior biology major, used to avoid bees whenever possible. However, as she found out more about the biology of bees, she was too interested to stay away. When she heard about the beekeeping course offered by Agriculture Professor Duane Bajema last spring, she decided to join. She learned many practical skills about caring for bees, from how to support their life cycle to winterizing the hives.



D. Bajema

Bajema told them, "If you're a scientist, you have to be observant. What do you see?"

She and others in the class began to observe the biological processes of bees and soon decided to form the Beekeeping Club. She enjoys working with the hives and "seeing the areas the bees grow

and work, and how the whole hive is organized like a little city." The hives are located in Dordt's Prairie, which provides the bees with ample native plants for pollination.

As Elenbaas checks on the hives each week in a beekeeping suit, Mariellen Hofland, a sophomore biology major, is beside her. Bajema, who occasionally joins club members at the hives, jokes with Hofland about her new interest in bees. Hofland grew up on a commercial bee farm, and she always saw bees as a chore more than an interest. They were something that, sometimes literally, invaded her life. She's come home to find boxes of bees sitting in her living room, only loosely covered with a net. She admits now that her disdain for bees is gone, something that makes both her father and Bajema smile.

This fall, Elenbaas, Hofland, and three

other students in the club were preparing to harvest the honey from their hives. They expected to extract about three gallons of honey, leaving behind enough to feed the bees during the winter months.

"We all appreciate getting away from classes and learning in a hands-on environment," says Hofland.

As the Beekeeping Club continues to grow, Hofland hopes not only to learn more about bees, but also to spark an interest for bees in other students on campus. Elenbaas says the experience has enabled her to see bees "more as part of God's creation and less as something to run from." With a laugh, Hofland describes her experience so far: "It's been sweet!"

ELIZABETH RILEY '15





# CONSTRUCTION TAKES ENDURANCE, JUST ASK

Dr. Joel Sikkema came back to the classroom this fall more convinced than he already was about the value of what he does during the school year.

Sikkema, who heads Dordt's construction management program and teaches future construction managers, spent his summer getting hands-on construction experience working on a \$1.7 billion fertilizer plant expansion project. He crawled under mobile trailers, installed PVC pipe, ran conduit, fished wire, hung light fixtures, and tested systems. As he did so, he watched how people related and talked with supervisors about what they do and why.

"I developed a ground-level appreciation for how important it is for everyone to work well together to successfully complete a large construction project," he says. "It takes a lot of collaboration and hard work to bring such big projects to completion."

Sikkema held an entry level position for Interstates Construction, a local company that contracts regionally and nationally. After spending 10 weeks working on a \$1.7 billion fertilizer plant expansion project, he believes he has a better understanding of how all the parts work together on a construction site and gained some positive and negative examples of how to make that happen that he can share with his students. He learned how to encourage safety on the job by helping workers think about what could go wrong rather than simply laying down rules; he learned how important it is to care about people and their health and wellbeing; and he learned the value of lean management practices, which minimize waste by implementing practices such as prefabrication, one touch installation, and no touch deliveries.

An engineer himself, Sikkema admits that engineers don't always think enough

about constructability when they design a project. His summer work helped him gain a better understanding of how both designers and construction managers can be good stewards of resources, including time and people.

Sikkema says the experience was invaluable and credits Interstates with helping make it so.

"Interstates has core values that I respect, and the company has had a long and good relationship with Dordt College. I was eager to work with them," he says. Their stated core values emphasize not bottom-line profitability but building relationships that will allow them to serve their customers: dependability, integrity, quality, trust, and family.

"They knew I would not work at Interstates longterm, but they were willing to take me on because they place high value on the work that Dordt does to train future construction managers."

—Dr. Joel Sikkema

Sikkema also appreciates Interstates holistic sense of excellence and points to a notepad inscribed with the Hawaiian word "Kina'ole" which means "Doing the right thing at the right time, for the right reason, the right way, for the right person, the first time."

It's a bit like the living the Christian life," he says about the adage.

"Hiring me for the summer demonstrates their willingness to look at the big picture. They knew I would not work

JAMIN VER VELDE '99



Dr. Joel Sikkema put on a new hat this summer to better understand the specific challenges that his construction management students will face in their profession.

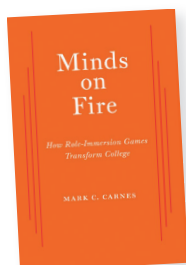
at Interstates longterm, but they were willing to take me on because they place high value on the work that Dordt does to train future construction managers.

Materials and techniques change so quickly in construction today that Sikkema was thankful for the opportunity stay current in the field. He hopes to be able to get into the field again in another couple of years, further expanding his experience.

SALLY JONGSMA



# REACTING TO THE PAST



A new book published by Harvard University Press titled *Minds on Fire: How Role Immersion Games Transform College* begins with a story about one of Dr. Paul Fessler's Dordt history classes. The author, Mark Carnes, a professor of history at Barnard College, Columbia University, devotes more than 10 pages to Fessler's use of *Reacting to the Past* games in his classes.

"I've been intrigued by classroom games since I participated in a Civil War game in college," says Fessler. Early in his teaching career, he used a simulation in a political science class and found that it engaged students and reinforced the ideas they were learning in a way that lectures often didn't.

He took advantage of Google's then-new search capabilities to look for other ways history professors were helping students engage ideas in fresh and interesting ways.

He found an article by historian Carnes about using a game based on the trial of Anne Hutchinson to teach history. Fessler emailed him and got a personal reply within a day, complete with plenty of information about *Reacting to the Past* games. He signed up to go to a conference that summer, "and the rest is history," he says.

At the *Reacting to the Past* conference, Fessler helped test games on topics he had taught for several years and found that he saw everything differently when he had to present and defend ideas as

though he was personally invested in the situation. Plus, it was great fun.

"I immediately sensed that students could make better sense of the idea of worldview if they had to put themselves in someone else's shoes and make arguments based on a historical person's way of thinking about their world," Fessler says.

Fessler points out that these games are not about reenacting historical events. Instead, players are assigned to act as a person would have acted in a particular

Students in this Civil War class line up unprompted to extemporaneously make their case to undecided voters in a 1861 Kentucky State House debate. They were arguing about whether Kentucky should secede from the union.

Source: Computer1  
(2008)

To help, press the @ b





historical setting and situation.

"Things can actually turn out differently than they did historically," Fessler says. In order to win the game, the major characters must persuade a group of moderates to support their views. Students read primary resources, write newspaper articles, and present speeches, not just for the professor but for the team and the cause.

That's what *Minds on Fire* chronicled. In an introduction titled "Debate at Dawn," Carnes writes about Dordt alumnus Nate Gibson's ('08), vivid memories of his experience in a game on the French Revolution, nine years after it occurred. When the class realized they would not be able to get through the whole game in the number of class periods left in the semester, they asked Fessler if they could start class at 7:30 for the remaining three classes, so they could finish.

Gibson is quoted as saying, "We read more in the weeks of the game than we had at any time before in the class. We plowed through the game manual, our history texts, Rousseau, you name it. We spent hours writing articles. I spent several all-nighters editing my faction's newspapers, and the other editors did, too. It had become more than a class to us by that point. The early morning sessions were the only way to honor the sacrifices that everybody had made."

That sentiment continues today. When Fessler announced to his class this semester that a photographer would be coming to shoot some photos on the final day of a game, some students responded, "They won't be here too long will they? We need to finish up today." A minute before it was scheduled to begin, the class looked like it had already been in progress for some time. Students had rearranged the furniture to better simulate the 1861 Kentucky state house for a debate about whether a secessionist



Students hold faction meetings, try to convince others of their point of view, and make back-room deals during debate recesses.

state could succeed. Some were passing out newspaper articles they had written. Energy was palpable.

Fessler asked one student, "Did you get anymore emails after 1:24? I had to go to bed." As the class proceeded, student after student lined up behind the podium waiting for a turn to speak. One student

"I have never tried harder in a class than when I am participating in a *Reacting to the Past* game. It is fueled by gaining factual knowledge, in-depth background, and competition."

—Kendall Evenhouse

ripped up a newspaper in frustration after being told some members of his party were under house arrest and couldn't vote.

"Some simulations can get very heated and students can get caught up in the emotion; however, in most cases, the emotion is warranted because it is part of

their character and not far off from actual historical debates," says senior Travis Vander Woude, who has participated in simulations on the Revolutionary War, the United States Constitution, the American Civil War, and also the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"The games have a way of bringing out the best in me," says Kendall Evenhouse. "I have never tried harder in a class than when I am participating in a *Reacting to the Past* game. It is fueled by gaining factual knowledge, in-depth background, and competition. I have learned how to do real research of primary sources, how to write a highly persuasive paper, and how to formulate a good argument for a debate. *Reacting to the Past* games also force you to think on your feet and be able to use what you have read in a real life scenario."

As sold as Fessler is on using role immersion games in his classes, he doesn't believe it's the only way to be a good teacher or the only way for students to learn. It works for him—and many others, but he's also known as an engaging lecturer. In fact, prior to beginning a game, he often lectures on the topic to help set the stage. And he rarely uses more than one game in a class in a semester.



"I don't want them to burn out," he says. It's fun but intense work for everyone."

"As a freshman and sophomore I had heard about how much work they were, so I dreaded the day that I was going to have to do one," says Vander Woude. "Now, after having done several, I would much rather do a simulation than write a large paper or sit through lectures. These simulations provide students with the opportunity to become better public speakers, better listeners, better cooperators, and possibly most importantly better critical thinkers."

"The fact that the students can go against what actually happened in history is a major plus. This allows them to see just how difficult the decisions were to make and how different life could have been if something had gone differently. I feel that it gives students a deeper appreciation for the study of history, and I wholeheartedly plan to use them in my classroom," says Evenhouse.

"Colonial America is my absolute favorite period in history. I've never had a strong

grasp as to what was going on during the ratification of the Constitution. Now it makes sense! I understand the terminology, some of the chronology, and especially the issues of the day more clearly than I ever have," says first-year student Alex MacDonald.

For Fessler, role immersion games offer a tool for getting students more involved in their learning, but they also help him focus on what he believes is important in teaching history. Fessler and his colleagues in Dordt's history department believe that history studies how people have shaped culture. So, whether cultural leaders believe in the sovereignty of God or believe in the sovereignty of humans affects the decisions they make and the way they act. Political systems, wars, laws, and textbooks reflect the values and worldviews of those who made them.

"How we act matters; it shapes history," says Fessler. History is not simply a neutral series of events; it describes where we are as a result of how people working out of their particular worldviews acted. It is a dynamic process that Christians can and do contribute to. Whether they act out of an intentional Christian worldview or an unintentional secular one is important, he adds.

"Students' eyes can glaze over when we talk about worldview—especially those from Christian schools who feel like they've heard all of this too often," says Fessler. Living into another person's world can help them see much more concretely how our world came to be what it is today and better prepare them to lead and serve others as Christians in our culture.

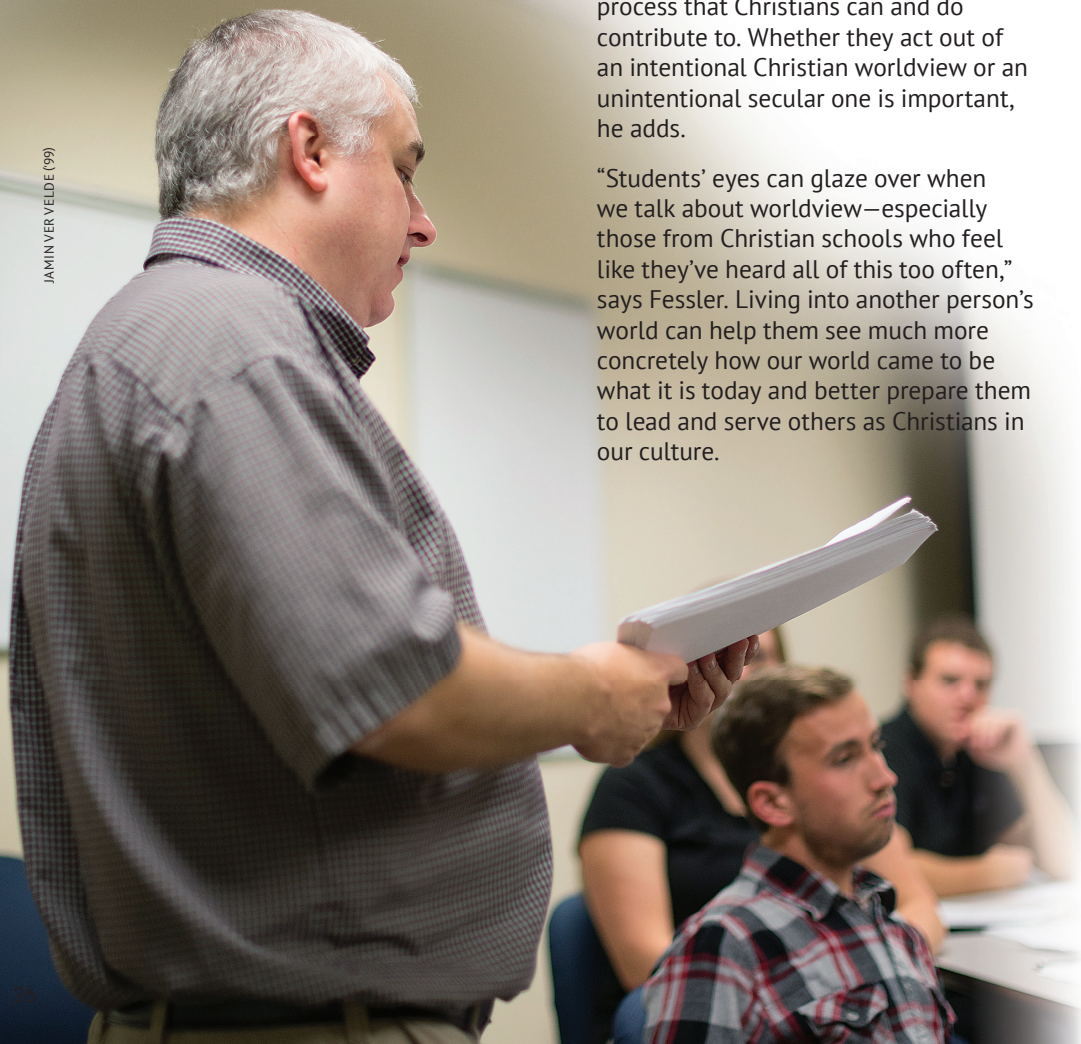
# IMPACT OF GAMES GOES BEYOND FESSLER

A pedagogical tool that History Professor Dr. Paul Fessler became involved in more than a decade ago has had a significant impact on current students, alumni, and some of his colleagues.

It began with funding from a Lily Foundation grant to attend a *Reacting to the Past* workshop on using role immersion games in the classroom. In the years since, Fessler has used the strategy numerous times; his history colleague Dr. Scott Culpepper and biology colleague Dr. Tony Jelsma have also used the games, as have former students who are now teachers. Current history education majors expect to use it in their classrooms because they say it was such a significant learning experience for them. And one first-year student this year says role immersion games are the reason she came to Dordt.

Fessler received an email from Ben Sytsma ('13) this fall: "Had a great final Constitutional Debate and decisions with the 10th graders today.... Thanks for all you have taught me about making history real. They loved this three-day simulation, and they even used Montesquieu and Locke to argue their points!!!"

Jelsma used a *Reacting to the Past*





game in a course he taught on Origins. “Charles Darwin, the Copley Medal, and the Rise of Naturalism” thrusts students into the intellectual ferment of Victorian England just after the publication of the *Origin of Species*. The event is a meeting of the Royal Society, but it helps students learn the scientific and cultural issues surrounding the debate over whether Darwin should receive the prestigious Copley Medal. Jelsma says his students became more independent learners, finding information they needed on their own. They also came to understand the issues at stake in a deeper way.

“That’s important for science majors,” he says, because the process of science is not straightforward. Students need to know how to think, test, and try again; they need to be motivated learners.

Culpepper has used an Elizabethan simulation called “Stages of Power: Henry VIII and the Reformation Parliament” in a Renaissance and Reformation course. Students in his class joined with Dr. Teresa Ter Haar’s theatre history course; his class served as members of Elizabeth’s privy council while the theatre students portrayed two competing theatre companies, one linked to William Shakespeare and the other to Christopher Marlowe, who were vying to get approval from the privy council to perform their plays. As members of Henry’s Reformation parliament they debated his divorce from Catherine of Aragon and marriage to Anne Boleyn and, in the process, decided the fate of England and each other as they decided whether to sever the country from allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church.

REBEKAH DYKHUIZEN ('14)



**History and theatre students got a taste of politics in Elizabethan England. Dr. Scott Culpepper’s history students served as members of Elizabeth’s privy council while Dr. Teresa Ter Haar’s theatre students played competing theatre companies of William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe, trying to get permission to perform their plays.**

“*Reacting* is a very innovative pedagogy that provides an opportunity to develop all the major skills that we strive to cultivate in our students,” says Culpepper. He has also used a simulation of the Scopes Trial that he created for a “Religion in American Culture” course.

“The beauty of *Reacting* is multi-faceted,” says Nate Gibson ('08), who is currently teaching in Japan. In a response thread to a review of *Minds on Fire* in the Sept. 29, 2014,

Chronicle of Higher Education, Gibson wrote, “*Reacting* is about practicing empathy with the past by stepping (however imperfectly) into the shoes of people who lived in another time and place. It’s about the first-hand recognition that our customs, assumptions, and ideas are shaped by our context and that all those who lived before us deserve to be studied with care and sensitivity. It’s

about the stunning realization that to the players who populate the pages of history texts, the future which we now occupy was just as uncertain as the future which lies before us now. It’s about the decisions that we make, in light of the decisions that our ancestors made.

“All of this can be offered to the students

“*Reacting* is a very innovative pedagogy that provides an opportunity to develop all the major skills that we strive to cultivate in our students.”

—Dr. Scott Culpepper

through story and lecture, and indeed, I find myself telling lots of stories in my teaching. However, giving the students a platform upon which to apply these understandings is a powerful cement, one which is likely to keep such learning intact through the years.”

SALLY JONGSMA

REBEKAH DYKHUIZEN ('14)



**In addition to playing an Elizabethan game, history and theatre students enjoyed themed treats with their simulation.**



# in **all** things

## ANDREAS CENTER LAUNCHES ONLINE MAGAZINE

Growing up in a Southern Ontario farming community, Philosophy Professor and Andreas Center Fellow Dr. Neal DeRoo recalls that many people in his community—farmers, mechanics, greenhouse workers—regularly read pamphlets and articles written by professors at Christian institutions. He recalls seeing booklets on Christian labor unions, farming, education, and theology

lying on coffee tables and hearing them discussed in after-church coffee conversations.

“It was the ‘little people’ (as Kuyper called them) who were engaging with this work, not just the highly educated ones,” says DeRoo. “We’ve lost much of that today.”

In his work with Dordt’s Andreas Center

for Reformed Scholarship and Service, De Roo and Andreas Center Assistant Liz Moss, an ordained pastor in the Reformed Church of America, hope to replicate the cultural impact that Christian scholars and institutions had on people like his parents and grandparents.

They want to create a way for more people to have conversations about topics that are important to them and

*In all things* will try to do what Dr. Neal DeRoo and his colleagues do every day: explore concretely what it means to live out of the lordship of Christ in every part of life in God’s creation.





“Along with the work of the Creator and the Spirit, Christ’s work is transformative for the entire creation. As such, we, as followers of Christ, are freed to do any and all things within this creation with gratitude to God and in service of God and God’s kingdom.”

From *inallthings.org*

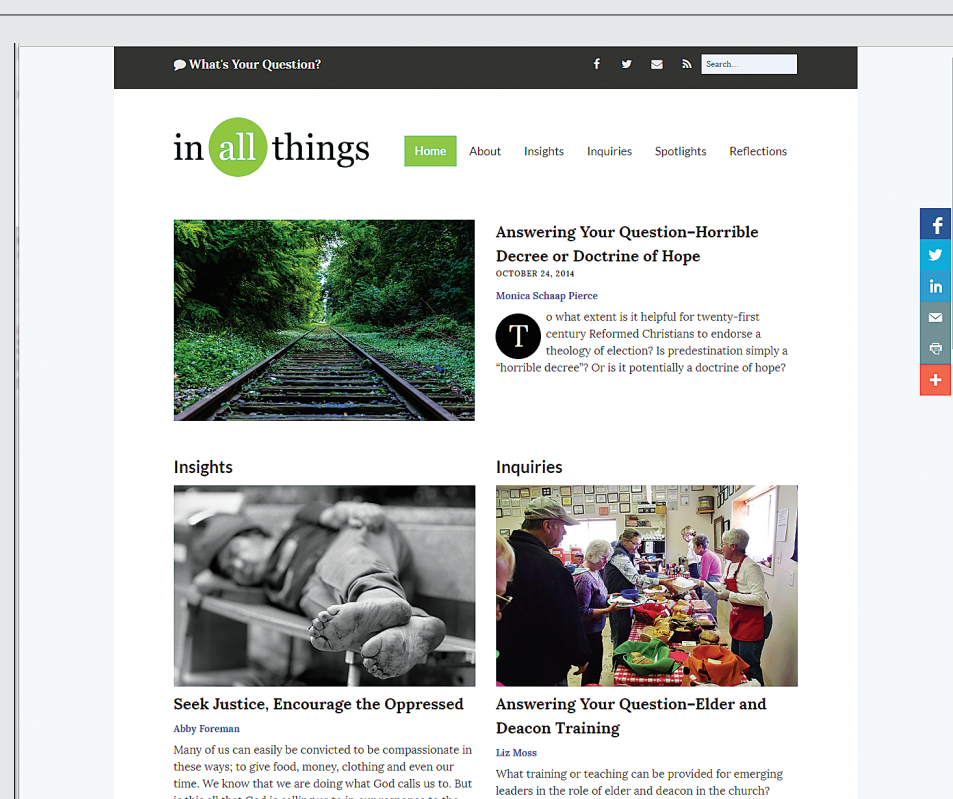
to Christ’s kingdom.

The result is *inallthings.org*. Today’s cultural context is different from that of DeRoo’s childhood, and most people don’t read print material as their parents and grandparents did. People engage with others online more often than at events or lectures or in living rooms, so they’re taking advantage of new opportunities for discussion provided by the Internet.

“There’s a growing gap between Christian scholars and those who support their institutions,” DeRoo says. “We do good work here at Dordt, and we want others to see that what we do can make a difference in how we live our daily lives.” He also thinks that Christian scholars might shape more of their research to fit what the Christian community needs if they had regular conversations with people from many walks of life. And he’s convinced that people in all kinds of jobs have valuable insights to share.

“It’s easy for Christians to simply adopt ‘best practices’ for how we do our work and live our lives, best practices that come from secular sources or from a more dualistic way of looking at the world,” says DeRoo. “At Dordt we have at our fingertips access to experts in a variety of fields. *In all things* offers an opportunity for Christians from a variety of places and backgrounds to reflect thoughtfully together on the conviction that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for our whole lives and for the entire world.”

## WEBSITE SECTIONS



**Insights We Want to Share:** Get a clearer picture of the world and our place in it.

**Inquiries We're Undertaking:** Thought-provoking articles, interviews, and opinion pieces that will inspire you to investigate more deeply.

**Spotlights:** Shorter pieces that offer a quick look into a part of the world.

**Reflections:** Contemplating our personal connection to God and the world.

Visitors to the site can comment on a post in one of these sections or pose their own question that *in all things* will try to help them answer by clicking on the “What’s Your Question?” bar at the top of each page.



## BACKGROUND

*"In all things* hosts discussions that seek to explore the concrete implications of Christ's presence in all facets of life. It is a place for conversation and exploration, to share ideas and learn from each other how to live in healthy relationships with God and creation" announces the website's "About" page.

The site draws its name from Colossians 1:17 ("He is before all things, and in him all things hold together") and Philippians 4:13 ("I can do all things through him who gives me strength"). On the website, Editor Neal DeRoo and Managing Editor Liz Moss want to explore with readers how God's Word speaks to issues beyond current hot-button topics such as origins and sexuality to topics such as parenting, cooking, watching sports, and electrical work—anything and everything that people do. They hope the site will help thoughtful Christians sift through the information overload in today's world and interact with others in a positive and constructive way on issues they care about.

"Just telling people how things should be or giving simple, pat answers is like telling people their ideas don't matter," DeRoo says. A better way, he and Moss believe, is for people to ask questions, share what they've learned, recommend authors who have written on a topic, and then engage in civil conversation.

That can be a tall order in today's world. In the Christian community, as well as in society generally, people often have little time for those with whom they disagree.

"But increasing numbers of people are sick of that model," says DeRoo. "We need to get beyond what splits us." Many of today's popular Christian writers are realizing that.

*In all things* will devote considerable space to thinking about how to live beside and with people with different viewpoints and to thinking about what it means to be disciples in all parts of our lives. It aims to demonstrate a different and deeper understanding of what it means to be Reformed and expand the impact Reformed scholars, artists, electricians, and people from all walks of life can have on their communities.

*In all things* is a venture of the Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College.

"There's a growing gap between Christian scholars and those who support their institutions. We do good work here at Dordt, and we want others to see that what we do can make a difference in how we live our daily lives."

Neal DeRoo

How that happens is as important to DeRoo and Moss as that it happens. *In all things* will try to help readers find tools that help them think about issues without telling them what to think. It will provide a forum that is conversational and communal, not confrontational and contentious.

"We hope the website will be more about showing and less about telling," they say.

They know that most people engage primarily with others who think the way they do, so *in all things* aims to present ideas in ways that invite people in, not raise their hackles if they don't immediately agree. DeRoo acknowledges that people in the Reformed community have contributed to such polarization by sometimes taking an overly aggressive posture. As a result some Christians and non-Christians tend to dismiss Calvinism based on its restrictive predestinarian doctrines rather than its culture-transforming vision. Christianity should foster a sense of grace that is shown in genuine caring for creation and people.

"Reformed people, too, often talk only to people with similar views and focus too much on the worldview that drives ideas rather than the people who hold them," says DeRoo. "Culturally we are seeing the effects of this."

DeRoo described his reception at a conference on political theology geared toward church practitioners where he was asked, "What's a Calvinist doing here?"

The conference focused on living out faith—how Christianity changes how people live and act and is not just

JAMIN VER VELDE (99)



As managing editor of *in all things*, Liz Moss works with authors, edits contributions, schedules posts, and publishes articles to the website.

focused on the afterlife. DeRoo was told, "You Calvinists are all about heaven or hell and living in fear of a super-powerful tyrant God. You'd just pray and sing psalms while the world burns. What do you have to say about being agents of social, political, and economic change and transformation here and now?"

"It helped me realize how little difference the thought of Kuyper and



“We don’t have to choose between transforming culture or personal piety, between common grace and special grace. We are transformed and sanctified so that we can become God’s agents of transformation in the world. This is the heart of the gospel, as understood by guys like Calvin and Kuyper.”

Neal DeRoo


Dooyeweerd has made in the broader cultural understanding of Calvinism and Reformed thought,” DeRoo says.

*In all things* won’t shy away from the fact that its foundations are unapologetically Christian, as it tries to be grace-filled.

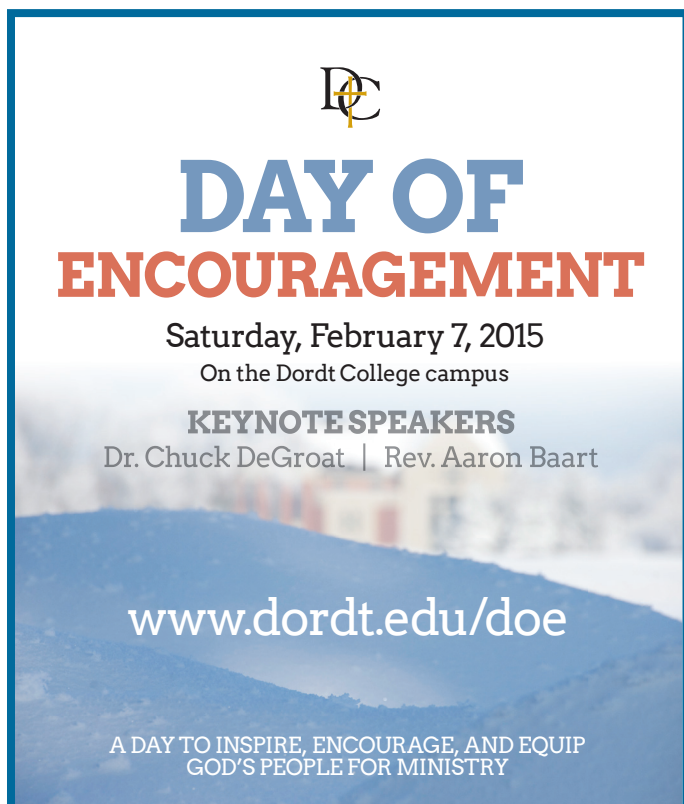
“We need to be involved as agents of cultural transformation—but we can do that well only if we ourselves have been transformed by Christ,” DeRoo says. “The guy at the conference was talking as if you could either be working for change or you could be praying and worshipping God. That’s a false dichotomy: We don’t


have to choose between transforming culture or personal piety, between common grace and special grace. We are transformed and sanctified so that we can become God’s agents of transformation in the world. This is the heart of the gospel, as understood by guys like Calvin and Kuyper.”

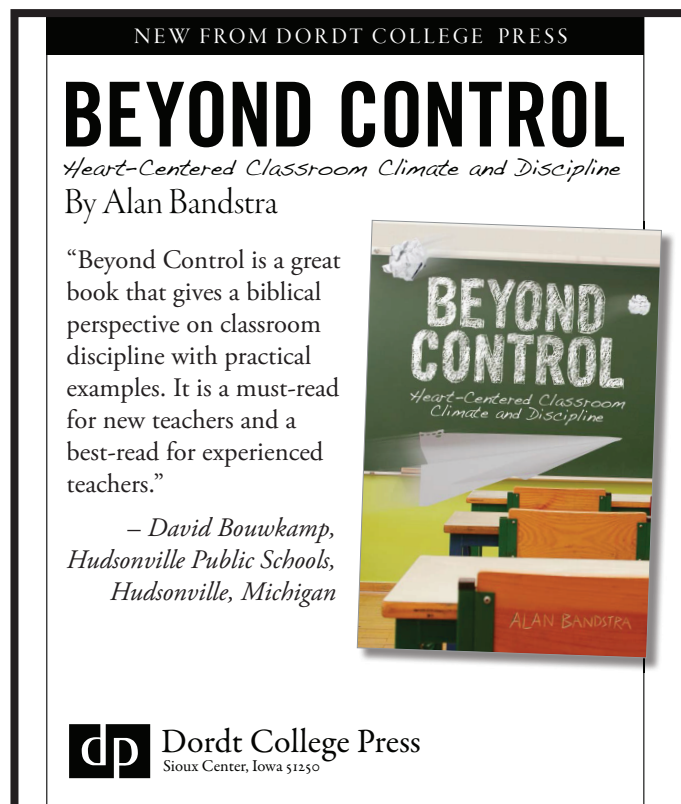
This biblical Reformed understanding can help Christians see that society’s structures as well as people have also been corrupted by sin and that Christians can work for moments of redemption in their communities, in politics, and in living their everyday lives.

“We have a lot to offer in the Reformed tradition. ‘Our world belongs to God,’ and God has big plans for it,” DeRoo says. “Loving God doesn’t take us out of this world, it sends us into this world in a new way. We don’t have to choose between God and the creation. In the Reformed tradition, you get to have it all. That message is one that all kinds of people are waiting to hear. The question is, will we share it with them—or just keep it to ourselves?” 

SALLY JONGSMA



  
**DAY OF  
ENCOURAGEMENT**  
 Saturday, February 7, 2015  
 On the Dordt College campus  
**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**  
 Dr. Chuck DeGroat | Rev. Aaron Baart  
  
[www.dordt.edu/doe](http://www.dordt.edu/doe)  
  
 A DAY TO INSPIRE, ENCOURAGE, AND EQUIP  
 GOD’S PEOPLE FOR MINISTRY



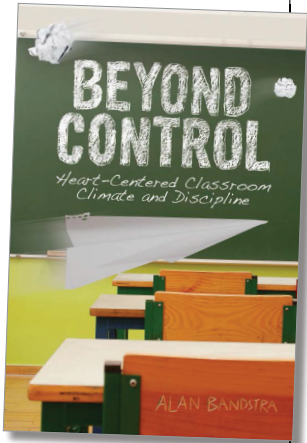
NEW FROM DORDT COLLEGE PRESS


## BEYOND CONTROL

*Heart-Centered Classroom Climate and Discipline*  
By Alan Bandstra

“Beyond Control is a great book that gives a biblical perspective on classroom discipline with practical examples. It is a must-read for new teachers and a best-read for experienced teachers.”

— David Bouwkamp,  
Hudsonville Public Schools,  
Hudsonville, Michigan




**Dordt College Press**  
 Sioux Center, Iowa 51250



# THE ART OF TRANSLATION

Another year is off to a bustling start. I'd like to tell you about some of the things we've been doing in the Office of Alumni and External Relations to serve both students and alumni.

In early October, 275 students came out to our **Job and Internship Extravaganza** to find the internship or first time job opportunity that could jump start their careers after college. Thirty employers came to campus from as far away as Massachusetts and California and as close as Sioux Center. They were convinced that Dordt educates the type of people they want to hire, people who think, solve problems, and communicate.

In the **Pacific Northwest, 200 alumni and friends** of the college came to watch the *Fourth World* documentary and join the answer-searching dialogue focused on slums. They left with hearts troubled by the state of world's poor and minds searching for ways to do something.



In **Montana, 50 alumni** came to the inaugural gathering of the Dordt College Big Sky Chapter. They shared food, navigated a corn maze, and roasted marshmallows together.

In **Denver, alumni** gathered to cheer on the soccer teams on Friday night and then woke up early Saturday morning to participate in a service project to kick off the first Denver chapter event.

**Alumni in Los Angeles, Kansas City, Des Moines, Seattle, and Milwaukee** have recently raised willing hands to host students for the summer or provide networking opportunities or church homes for those settling into new communities. Thank you!

Each of these examples shows how the sense of community alumni experienced on Dordt's campus is being translated into their communities. As alumni, you are reaching out and inviting others into the special experience that comes with attending Dordt College. Dordt alumni are finding their place in God's world.

## COMING SOON

Watch for these Upcoming Regional Events:

- November 19** Basketball team in **Des Moines**
- November 20** Worship Team Culture and Ethics Seminar at **Dordt College**
- November 20** Dordt Connections Dinner in **Kansas City**
- November 22** Fourth World documentary showing in **Toronto**
- November 22** Cross Country Nationals (tentative) in **Lawrence, Kansas**

The future of Dordt College and its efforts to work toward Christ-centered renewal in all aspects of life does not rest solely with the institution, the board of trustees, or even our current faculty, staff, and students. It belongs to all of us, including alumni. You know this place inside and out; you know our language and you have been translating it into your life since you graduated.

I've found it refreshing to hear students and alumni talk about their aspirations, but it's even more inspiring to see those dreams benefit families, workplaces, churches, and relationships. Will you help others translate a Dordt education into a way of living and serving? Are there young people in your life anticipating four of the most formative years of their lives? Invite them into our community by sharing [www.HowWeDoCollege.com](http://www.HowWeDoCollege.com) with them. And if you find yourself searching for rich conversations about what it means to have Christ at the center of all things, join the discussion at [www.inallthings.org](http://www.inallthings.org).

Thanks to you, we are translating the community of Dordt College into many contexts, languages, and cultures. Together, we can do so with the next generation.

BRANDON HUISMAN ('10), DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

PHOTO SUBMITTED



In September, Denver alumni spent a morning together painting a house for a gentleman identified by Chad Nibbelink ('07), the volunteer coordinator for Brothers Redevelopment.



# Mike Adams

2014 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI: Class of 1994

Engineer, Christian, businessman, philanthropist, father, and volunteer are all words that can be used to describe Mike Adams ('94). Some of them would have surprised him if he'd heard them when he graduated.

Adams grew up wanting to be an engineer and spent the first 10 years after graduation doing so. Then in 2003, while chief engineer at Behr Heat Transfer in Canton, South Dakota, he learned that its German parent company planned to close the plant. He decided to try purchasing the business to help keep local jobs, and he became the CEO of a new company, Adams Thermal Systems. (See a 2004 alumni profile of Adams at [bit.ly/1pZpEj2](http://bit.ly/1pZpEj2))

"Sometimes God takes you places you wouldn't have imagined going," Adams says. His first years as CEO were spent trying to put into practice his vision for structuring a business in a way he felt would best glorify God. Economic justice was one of his primary concerns, and he tried to develop a payroll system that reflected his understanding of economic justice. He tried to find ways to encourage employees to strive for quality and take pride in their work.

The company grew dramatically in those years, and Adams says his Dordt education gave him the technical and communication skills needed for his new role. It also helped him think about expanding the company's mission beyond offering good products and treating its employees well to also serving other communities.

"The Lord impressed upon my heart early on the importance of supporting ministry from the business with a first fruits tithe. I learned this from my father and then in the Engineering 390 class as we worked to apply this idea to a business model. At ATS, we have been grateful to have partnered with many ministries these past 10 years, and the Lord has been



DOUG BURG

faithful in blessing us through these relationships," says Adams. A percentage of the company's sales supports the needs of people locally, nationally, and internationally.

"My mom tells me that, as a young kid, I cried when I heard about someone who didn't have enough food," says Adams. His wife, Kim (Vander Weide, '94) had similar feelings. It's one of the reasons the Adams family includes nine children today. In addition to five biological children, they have adopted three children from Ethiopia and one from

## Alumni Bits

### '60s

**John Dale Piersma** ('69) passed away unexpectedly on February 6, 2014. John and his wife **Mary (Roelofs, '68)** recently retired to Cincinnati, near family, after living in Huntsville, Alabama, where John was a family physician and Mary was a professor at the University of Alabama.

### '70s

**Bonnie (Hibma, '71)** Pruckler, a physical therapist in Cedar Falls, Iowa, is a MOVE International Trainer, working with people who have severe disabilities. She travels widely to fit wheelchairs provided by Hope Haven International and Joni and Friends.

□ **Hattie (Allen, '74)** and **Martin Van Dyk** ('76) celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on May 14, 2014. They have four children and eight grandchildren.



### '80s

Jeanette Vander Molen, a Dordt mom, **Arllys (Van Maanen, '80)** and Rick Jasper ('80) met **Karen (Christoffels, '80)** and **Marlin Van Schepen** ('80) unexpectedly at a restaurant in Talkeetna, Alaska. They recognized each other by their Dordt apparel.



□ **Deb (Verbrugge, '81)** and **Dave DeJong** ('83) gathered with their four children **Dan DeJong** ('07), **Josh DeJong** ('09), **Rachel (DeJong, '11)** Luttjeboer, and **Matt DeJong** ('14), to celebrate Matt's marriage to **Mia Kornelis** ('13). Five grandchildren show their support for Dordt.



## Alumni Bits

### '80s



□ **Linda (Kroon, '82) and Dan Kroeze ('83)** celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary, which included a visit with Dan's former roommate **Jan Siebersma ('83)** and his wife, Sandi.



□ When **John Mulder ('86)** heard that the Dordt College sign on 4th Avenue was removed, it made him send this picture taken in 1997. With the recent celebration of his parents' 60th anniversary, Mulder gives thanks for parents who saw the value of education and encouraged all eight children to graduate from Dordt College—at a time when attending college was not so common. *Pictured: Milt Mulder ('79), Doug Mulder ('78), Donna DeLong ('81), Brenda Brandhoff ('85), Lori Natelborg ('92), Sue Halma ('83), Phil Mulder ('88), John Mulder ('86)*

**Linda (VandenBos, '89)** De Haai helped organize a fundraiser for Water For Water. On August 6, children and adults swam to help raise money for five wells for the "untouchable" poor and orphans in India. The interactions that resulted led many to a relationship with Christ, says De Haai.

### '90s

**Laurel (Beukelman, '91)** Buwalda was ordained in the Evangelical Covenant Church in June. Laurel received her master of divinity from Sioux Falls Seminary and is hospice chaplain coordinator for Sanford Hospice in Sioux Falls. She and her husband **Joel Buwalda ('91)** have two sons, Lane and Mason.

## Mike Adams

2014 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI: Class of 1994

Uganda. "God has blessed us by weaving together our love for children and his love for the orphan and disadvantaged (Psalm 68:5)," says Adams.

Today Adams Thermal Systems includes three entities: Adams Thermal Systems, Inc., which manufactures cooling systems for on- and off-highway vehicles; Adams Thermal Systems Cares, which supports employees; and Adams Thermal Systems Foundation, which focuses on local, national, and worldwide poverty.

"We structure the company to reflect serving the market place, our employees, and of course ministry. All work is ministry, and this structure has helped us perform this work," says Adams.

The ATS Foundation, established last year ([www.adamsthermalfoundation.org](http://www.adamsthermalfoundation.org)), supports approximately 1,000 children by providing food, clothing, and education in the poorest communities in Ethiopia. It also supports efforts to confront HIV/AIDS through an orphanage in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and it partners with A Hope for Children and Food for the Hungry to provide housing, medicine, adoption, and education for people living with HIV/AIDS.

"The international component was a large leap of faith for us," says Adams. "We are seeking others to help us bring a Christ-centered education to these children. I am hoping the Lord can use this article to reach others in the Dordt community who he may be calling to his work in Ethiopia."

The ATS Foundation also supports local and national organizations, working with Food for the Hungry and the Banquet to support 250+ employee-sponsored children, 88,000 school lunches annually, monthly local meals for homeless people, and paid time off for employees who volunteer to serve others.

Through ATS Cares and the work of the foundation, the company supports neighborhoods and families. It has fully

## FAMILY AFFAIR



"We're that crazy family with nine kids," says Mike Adams. "One of the blessings from the Lord for our family has been our children."

Kinsley is 16, Justus, 14; twins Mason and Malia, 12; Josiah, 9; Eva, 7, was adopted in 2008 from Ethiopia; Selena, 5, came from Ethiopia in 2009; Amanuel, 8, came from Ethiopia in 2012; and Shakira, 4, came from Uganda earlier this year.

The Adams family travels together frequently to the places they support in Africa.

"Seeing poverty through a child's eyes makes things very simple," says Mike. "Here's a child with no mother or father or with no food—they need help." He believes such visits have helped his children see beyond what they feel they need and gain a more global view of materialism, poverty, the church, and how God is working in his world.

"We have a large family, and they are our primary job until they are grown. But we serve a large God and want them to learn that."

funded four homes in the past four years and is committed to 20 years of doing the same. The company gives paid time off for employees to volunteer with organizations like Habitat for Humanity and the Alpha Center. It also works with many nonprofits to reach out to the next generation through middle and high school campus clubs, sports camps, mentoring, competition, a Christian music festival, and a national call-in radio show for troubled teens.





DOLG BURG

Mike Adams and his extended family also celebrated the naming and dedication of the Charles Adams Engineering Wing over Defender Days weekend. Mike credits his father, Charles, with helping instill in him a vision for what serving God as an engineer and businessman could look like.

In one sense the external efforts of ATS have been the easiest ways to bring change that reflects his vision for serving, says Adams. Internal change is always harder. He believes that biblical principles of justice and mercy translate into business practices and policies, but with a large number of employees with a range of worldviews and a history of operating in certain ways, changes can take a long time.

Starting something new is always easier than reshaping.

Changing how a company is managed and operates is challenging when you need to get products out the door and keep daily operations flowing. And mistakes happen at all levels, sometimes serious ones.

"When something fails, it's easy to feel like giving up," Adams says, adding that, as a Christian, you don't want your failures to have a negative impact on others' attitudes toward faith or on positive efforts imperfectly executed.

"But God shows evidences of his grace even in deep dark places," Adams says. "Recognizing you're imperfect is important for helping you learn from failures and be able to lead."

ATS employees do not all share Adams' vision, but most people of faith who work there, whether Christian, Muslim, or Jewish, do, he says. Many volunteer their time locally and even in Ethiopia.

Mike and Kim Adams attest to the fact that by taking some risks, God has truly blessed them.

"Growing up we didn't know we would

"God shows evidences of his grace even in deep dark places. Recognizing you're imperfect is important for helping you learn from failures and be able to lead."

—Mike Adams

have a large family, but our kids have been a blessing and changed our lives," they say. Their goal is to honor God by being good Christian parents, citizens, and professionals.

"But sometimes you have to slow down to hear what the Lord puts in front of you, realize you cannot do things perfectly, but none the less press forward in faith knowing that God will use you."

SALLY JONGSMA

## Alumni Bits

### '90s

**Beth (Boender, '92)** and **Dan Trumble** returned to Colorado Springs, Colorado, in June 2013 after working at African Bible College in Malawi for more than three years. They have four children.

**Sharletta (Postma, '95)** and **Tim Vander Pol ('95)** welcomed Zebedee James on August 27, 2013. He joins Abigail, Julia, Malachi, Simeon, and Josiah. Tim is a vice president at Peninsula Truck Lines, and Sharletta home schools the children.

**Karen (Van Donselaar, '98)** and **Jason Soodsma ('96)** of Aurora, Colorado, announce the birth of Halle Renee on April 26, 2014.

**Arin** and **Paul Shupe ('98)** welcome Layla Blossom, born November 27, 2013. The family lives in Michigan.



1998 roommates gathered for a reunion. Back left: **Missy (Corbin) Mulder**, **Erika (Rozeboom) Schelling**, **Missy (Dykstra) Goodrich**, **Andrea (Schaap) Westerbeek**, **Jane (Manuel) Bruin**. Front: **Jessica (Radsma) Ten Haken**, and **Amy Westra**.

**Christina** and **Joel Vos ('99)** welcomed Emily Rachel, born on August 29, 2013, in Sioux City, Iowa.

**Michael** and **Danielle (Kamps, '99)** Constant welcomed Jonathan Jasper on May 7, 2014, in Tuscon, Arizona.

### '00s

**Colleen (Evenhouse, '00)** and **Scott Platt** welcomed Nicolas Drew, born February 27, 2014. The family lives in University Park, Iowa.

**Ed** and **Janet (Velthuis, '00)** Ymker welcomed Micah Joe on August 12, 2014.

# James Schaap

2014 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI: Class of 1970

James C. Schaap, who has read thousands of books, listened to hundreds of podcasts and lectures, given dozens of presentations, and written 23 books, says today, “When you get old, you get more sure of what you don’t know than what you do.”

Yet life’s complexities and paradoxes continue to intrigue and motivate him.

Although most of Schaap’s professional life was spent teaching literature and writing—a good, full life, Schaap identifies himself primarily as a writer. For decades he’s been getting up in the pre-dawn hours to find time to put his words and ideas on the page or screen before heading to class. Old habits die hard. He continues to do so in retirement—when he’s not traveling and speaking around the country or the world—until it’s time to bring his wife a morning cup of coffee to begin the rest of their day.

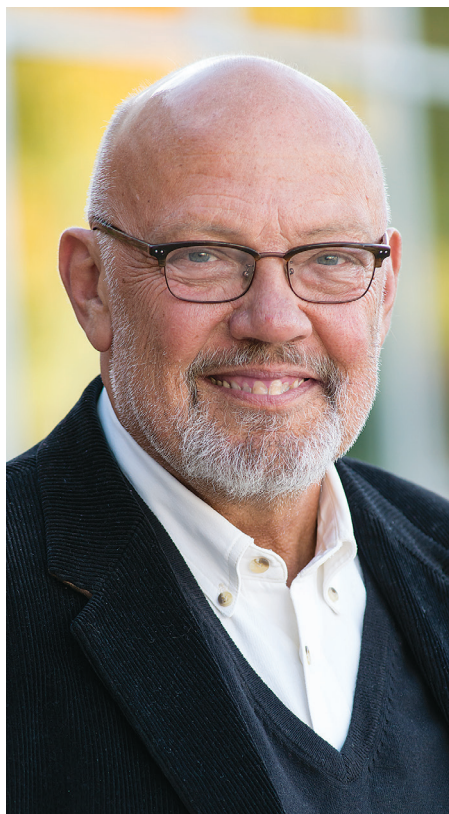
Writer and professor are closely tied though.

“Literature can help you see life and can help you ask ‘Who am I?’” he says. He’s learned from literature and created it.

Schaap came to Dordt College as a student in 1966, at the beginning of the cultural upheaval of the late 1960s. He learned early on that he wanted and needed to write, but he says that to do that he had to figure out who he was. As he graduated, he was quite certain that was not a “Dutch Reformed conservative.”

“I never doubted God,” he says, but he did question how faith was sometimes expressed in the communities of which he was a part.

The thing that kept him connected to those communities was what he learned primarily in a single course with Dr. John Vander Stelt, he says, a course called then, simply, “Calvinism.” He came to see Kuyperian Calvinism as an outward-looking, freeing worldview rather than



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the inward-looking, repressive one he came to feel it was as a young man.

“I began to see that Christians are part of a bigger world and could and should engage that world in meaningful ways,” he says. For him that would be largely through writing.

What Vander Stelt and a number of Dordt’s Canadian students at the time planted grew and subtly pulled him back closer to his roots. He tells of an incident when he, a young public school teacher, was asked to serve on a local Christian school board. A local pastor of a nondenominational church asked the board to tell his congregation what

made their Christian school different from the one down the block. Most board members knew it had to include more than high moral standards and Bible classes, but they weren’t sure how to articulate that.

“I could because of what I learned at Dordt,” he says. “That all of life belongs to the Lord has concrete implications for what and how we teach, even if those implications aren’t always easy to discern.”

Experiences like these and life itself helped him see who he was as a Christian coming out of a particular background but who also wasn’t completely defined by it. It helped him also see who he wasn’t.

“Life is full of paradoxes,” he says, admitting that he finds he’s often compelled to write about these paradoxes and the mysteries they carry with them. His recent book *Rehoboth, A Place for Us*, based on the Christian Reformed Church’s decades-long mission efforts in New Mexico, captures one such paradox.

“Native American missions in New Mexico is one of the finest things we’ve done, even though we’ve often gone about it poorly or even done things wrong,” he says. “Still, by grace, we’ve done exceptionally well. God Almighty has a way of making our wrongs right somehow—it’s amazing.”

Schaap has written 23 books that include novels, short-story collections, nonfiction, essay collections, and devotionals. His work has received awards from *Christianity Today*, *Best Christian Writing*, the Evangelical Press Association, and the Associated Church



# Alumni Bits

## '00s



□ In October, **Kelly (Regnerus)** Van Overloop, **Amy (Van Dam)** Runia, **Teresa (Van Den Broek)** Rens, **Rhonda (Schoep)** Fopma, **Heidi (Hilbelink)** Greenwood, and **Colleen (Evenhouse)** Platt, all Class of 2000, met for a "Roommate Reunion" in Galena, Illinois. Roommates for two years, they also met "honorary roomie" **Stacy (Bomgaars)** Johnson ('98) at Dordt. They decided not to wait 14 years for the next reunion!

**Julie (Kielstra, '00)** and **Matt Vanden Heuvel ('00)** welcomed Elise Joy on May 5, 2014, in Calgary, Alberta.

Miranda and **Justin Vander Werff ('00)** announce the birth and adoption of Ezra Lee. Ezra joins siblings Lydia, Laiya Naomi, and Josiah. Justin teaches engineering at Dordt College.

**Sam Gutierrez ('00)** published a book of Christmas poems, *God Birth*, available on Amazon.com. Gutierrez recently graduated from Western Theological Seminary and is a campus pastor at the University of British Columbia-Okanagan Campus.



**Janelle (Van Leeuwen, '01)** and **Dale Swager ('00)** of Sioux Center welcomed Emerson on March 3, 2013.

Joel and **Brandie (Ochsner, '01)** welcomed Jacob Hendrik on August 16, 2014, in Sussex, New Jersey.

**Kristin (Zomermaand, '01)** and Corey Webster welcomed Joshua Matthew on June 1, 2014.

**Melissa (Beltman, '01)** and **Curtis Visser ('02)** welcomed Kensi on March 8, 2014. The family lives in Bigelow, Minnesota.

Press, as well as the Christy Award, honoring the best fiction written from out of a Christian worldview. And he continues to write almost every day, either on his daily blog or another project.

As he gets up each morning he's home and looks out over the usually inspiring Iowa landscape, he's moved with awe at both the wonder of the world God created and the way he works in it.

"I think Christian education is first of all about inspiring awe," he says. "And the degree to which we teach and feel that awe is the degree to which we kneel before him." His learned sense of awe gets him up each morning knowing that something happened to someone that day that matters and that others can learn from. The often ragged corners of the world provide him with an overflow of ideas about which to think and write; and it keeps him learning each day.

"That we continue to learn is an incredible joy," Schaap says. "It makes everything interesting."

That's what prompted his latest book, *Up the Hill*, a playful exploration of everyday saints looking down at life that goes on after they die. "What happens when we die? The New Testament talks about being surrounded by a cloud of witnesses. Really? These questions are a joy to entertain," he says.

**Jim and Barb Schaap** have moved to the country to enjoy the glories of sunrises and sunsets—when they're not traveling and speaking.

Asked how he's changed as a writer over the years, he says he has a more *c'est la vie* feeling about things. He doesn't try to consciously influence people so much as explore ideas and tell a good story. But he hopes his writing will add to the lives of people trying to live as God's children in his world.

"It's not easy to dance with the Lord in the world," he says. "But being a Christian is so much bigger than drawing

"I think Christian education is first of all about inspiring awe. And the degree to which we teach and feel that awe is the degree to which we kneel before him."

—James C. Schaap

moral lines. I'm so glad to have been where I was in history, glad to have had my identity shaped at Dordt College at a time when big questions were being asked and the world was shifting."

SALLY JONGSMA



# Alumni Bits

## '00s

**Amber (Hoogland, '02)** and **Thomas De Jong ('02)** announce the birth of Lucas Ray, born March 1, 2014. The family lives in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Rebecca and **Kevin Kingma ('02)** adopted nine year-old Jacob Anthony on September 3, 2014. Kevin teaches math and computer at Kankakee High School in Illinois.

**Mindy (Kooiman, '02)** and **Douglas Holesinger ('00)** welcomed Jenna Lynae on June 6, 2014. She joins Luke and Cade in Fulton, Illinois.

Rachel and **Darren De Groot ('02)** welcomed Sylvia Dawn on June 10, 2014. She joins sisters Meredith, Kaitlyn, and Lauren in St. Louis, Missouri.

Katie and **David Myrdahl ('02)** welcomed Joshua John, born March 19, 2014. He joins Matthew in Banning, California.

**Carol (Hiner, '03)** and **Alan Yates ('03)** of Fayetteville, West Virginia, announce the birth of Catherine Anabelle on May 1, 2014.

**Leah (De Nooy, '03)** and Todd Brouwer announce the birth of Kaylee Rose, born February 18, 2014, in Manhattan, Montana.

**Michelle (Stap, '03)** and **Mark Tolsma ('03)** welcomed Ethan, born December 30, 2013, in Lynden, Washington.



□ 2004 roommates recently met for a reunion in Omaha. Left to right: **Sara McReynolds**, **Katie (Kroese) Wierenga**, **Tracy (Ouwinga) Eekhoff**, **Ruth (Van Essen) Clark**, **Bobbie (Schouten) Kroese**, and **Stephanie (Greydanus) Dalrymple**. Not pictured is **Amber (Fopma) Kinner**.

**Zachary ('04)** and Stacy **Kanis** welcomed Koen Jesse on July 28, 2014, in Pella, Iowa.

# Merl Alons

2014 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI: Class of 1959

When Merl Alons graduated from Dordt College, he signed a contract to teach seventh grade at Rock Valley Christian School. A short time later he got a call from the school board asking him to be principal as well.

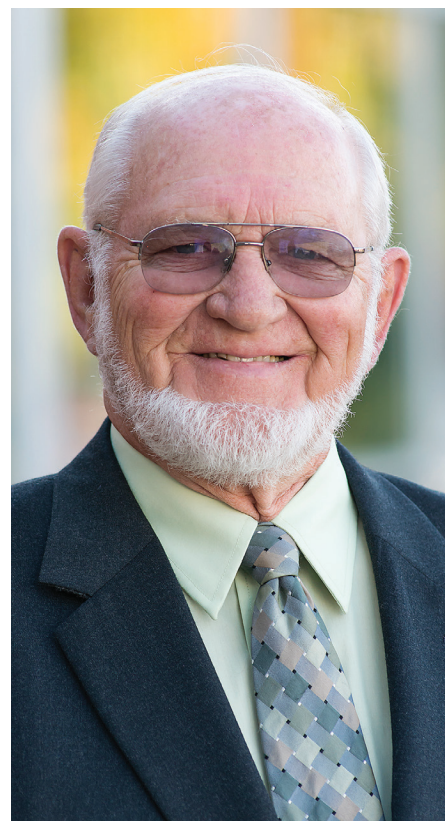
He told them he had no training to be a principal and suggested that they find someone else, but they told him no one else was available. So, at the age of 21, Alons was suddenly seventh-grade teacher and principal of Rock Valley Christian School.

Alons stayed on as principal for seven years, and over the next 35 years—42 years in all—served as principal for five other Christian schools: Pella Christian Grade School (eight years); Sioux Center Christian School (10 years); Central Valley Christian School, Visalia, California (six years); Sheboygan County Christian High School, Wisconsin (10 years); and Manitowoc, Wisconsin (one year).

Why so many different schools? “I promised myself I wouldn’t stay longer than 10 years at any school,” says Alons. “That way the strengths you bring to the school are somewhat established and yet, you know you have weaknesses, so someone else can come in and, perhaps, bring new or different strengths.”

This awareness of his weaknesses as well as his strengths must have served Alons well, for he has only positive memories of his career in Christian education. In fact, he had to ponder a while before coming up with any negative aspects connected to being a Christian school principal. But he did observe that the Christian school principal in a Christian community is always on the job, and “that can take its toll. You’re never not principal and so you have stuff to deal with all the time,” he said. “Sometimes I neglected my family because of the job.”

At one point in his career he was not only



DOUG BURG

principal but also a lobbyist for Christian schools at the Iowa Legislature and a member of the church council. When he came home for dinner, his kids wouldn’t ask, “Are you going to be home tonight?” but “Where are you going tonight?”

Still, anyone who talks to Alons will realize that he loves his life’s work. He remembers with great pleasure his relationships with teachers, and he and his wife cultivated these relationships by engaging in frequent social activities with staff, getting together for games and having them over for dinner. He also sought to give teachers decision-making



power and “always worked hard to increase their salaries.”

His relationships with the school boards he served with were equally felicitous. “I was blessed with boards who were supportive, progressive, and supplied budgets needed to provide Christian education,” he said.

Alons says that in his relationship with students, he thought of himself as their *advocate*. He sees two sides to this role: First, he is their cheerleader and encourager, especially at athletic contests, concerts, and plays. But he also sees the administration of discipline as a kind of advocacy that teaches students the valuable lessons of living by the rules and taking responsibility for their behavior.

He continues to hear from former students who express “wonderful words of thanks.” Looking back over his career, Alons says, “I can’t think of a more exciting occupation, and it’s a job where you can have so much of an impact on so many people—not just students, but parents and teachers as well.”

While Alons’ career in Christian education began in Rock Valley in 1961, his involvement in Christian education began much earlier. He attended Sheldon Christian School where a Mrs. Vanden Bosch had a powerful influence on him and encouraged him to think about becoming a teacher. He went on to Western Christian High School, and then, “there was Dordt, just down the road.” So, in the fall of 1957, Merl milked his 16 cows in the morning before heading off to Dordt College—which at that time consisted of one building, a handful of

professors, and “was kind of like a big family.” Later, when he was principal at Sioux Center Christian, his wife Rose was able to complete her degree at Dordt.

These days, more than 10 years into retirement, Merl and Rose live for four months of the year in northern Minnesota helping run a resort owned by

“I can’t think of a more exciting occupation, and it’s a job where you can have so much of an impact on so many people.”

—Merl Alons

Rose’s brother. The rest of the year they live in Sun City, Arizona, where they are busy in church and community affairs. And from time to time they visit their children—Deborah in Houston, Texas, where she sings in the Houston Opera and works as assistant to the director of Houston YMCAs; Nicki, who teaches at Orange City Christian School; and Jason, who is principal at Orange City Christian School. Their older son Jeff passed away in 1995.

At Dordt’s Jubilee celebration in 2005, Merl and Rose Alons were two of several alumni featured in a short video. Near the end of the segment, Rose asks Merl, “Would you do it all again, this lifelong, total involvement in Christian education?”

Merl replies, “No question. We are required to train up our children in the Lord and to do this in all of life. Christian schools are something we use as Christian parents to help us know what it means to serve the Lord in everything, in all of life.”

DAVE SCHELHAAS ('64) IS PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH EMERITUS

## Alumni Bits

### '00s

**Angela (Gernandt, '04)** and Ryan Hannigan welcomed Isabella Grace on June 23, 2014. Angela teaches Spanish at Sioux Center Christian and Western Christian High School.

**Andrea (Van Wyk, '05)** and **Myron Kamper ('05)** welcomed Alina Faith on February 25, 2014, in Visalia, California. She joins Jacob and Myer.

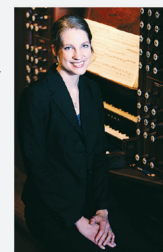
**Bonnie (Kingma, '05)** and Derek Hollaar welcomed Kaylee Mae, born May 22, 2014.

**Jody (Van Zanten, '06)** and **Shane Dooyema ('06)** announce the birth of Kate Rebecca on January 31, 2014, in Brookfield, Wisconsin.

**Jillaine (Gruppen, '06)** and **Christopher Van Huis ('06)** welcomed Aleah on January 3, 2014, in West Olive, Michigan.

**Kerri (Keizer, '06)** and Kyle Van Der Brink welcomed Lexi Rose, born December 12, 2013. Lexi joins Ali and Shaye in Rock Valley, Iowa.

▣ **Carrie (Spronk, '06)** Groenewold completed a doctor of musical arts in church music/organ from the University of Kansas School of Music. Currently, she is the director of music at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where she lives with her husband, **Jevon ('06)**, and their two children, Levi and Adelyn.



Steve and **Rebecca (Franje, '06)** Bogaard welcomed Jacinth Carryn on October 4, 2014. She joins Creed and Zemirah. Steve is the natural science lab coordinator at Dordt.

**Alicia (Mulder, '06)** and **Andrew Geleynse ('07)** welcomed Carter James on November 23, 2013. He joins Eli and Jace. Andrew is an occupational therapist for Sioux Center Health; Alicia stays home with the boys and teaches piano.

# Alumni Bits

## '00s

**Rachel (Hamstra, '07)** and **Justin De Jong ('07)** of Pella, Iowa, welcomed Faith Elizabeth, born July 9, 2014. She joins Jonathan and Noah.

**Traci (Kooima, '07)** and Kyle Hiemstra welcomed Kullen Jake on June 9, 2014. He joins Kendyl and his family in Sioux Center, Iowa.

**Mary (Davelaar, '07)** and **Craig Van Drunen ('07)** welcomed Zoey Beth on April 16, 2014, in Spencer, Iowa.

□ **Brittany and Derek Keizer ('07)** welcomed Kenleigh Jade on September 28, 2014. Derek is assistant men's basketball coach at Dordt College.



**Eliot ('07)** and **Jessica De Wit** welcomed Josiah Asher on July 14, 2014, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

**Trisha (Fynaardt, '08)** and **Andrew Schreier ('07)** welcomed Kendra Sue on February 5, 2014. They live in Sioux Center, Iowa.

**Jennifer (Alkema, '08)** and Rinse de Boer welcomed Jos David on August 26, 2013, on Prince Edward Island.

Becky and **Ben Werkhoven ('08)** welcomed Philip Samuel on September 17, 2014. They live in Hagerman, New Mexico.

**Sarah (Van Stempvoort, '08)** and Sam Lin welcomed Alexander James on February 1, 2014, in Madison, Wisconsin.

**Fred ('09)** and Kelsey **Leyendekker** welcomed Clay Gerben, Aaron Jeffrey, and Jackson Bernard on August 5, 2014, in Visalia California.

**Jordan ('09)** and **Kristin (DeRonde, '09) Dyk** welcomed Gavin Henry on August 11, 2014, in Jenison, Michigan.

**Jessica (Veenstra, '09)** and **Chris Vogel ('09)** welcomed Willa Mae, born July 13, 2014, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

# DEFENDER DAYS SNAPSHOTS

Welcome Reception

5:24  
PM



5:59  
PM

Classes of 1989-1992 25-Year Class Reunion



Business Connections Breakfast

7:09  
AM





11:22  
PM

Late Night with the Defenders



11:27  
PM



11:29  
PM

7:12  
PM

Alumni Volleyball Games



9:11  
PM

Music Festival



**FRIDAY**  
OCTOBER 17



# DEFENDER DAYS SNAPSHOTS

Football Game

1:54  
PM



JAMIN VERVELDE '99

Blades Hockey Game

6:12  
PM



TIS TIDE '18

3:38  
PM



JAMIN VERVELDE '99

Science and Technology Center Dedication

11:10  
AM



DOUG BURG



**5:31**  
PM

## Defender Nation Dinner



**9:41**  
AM

## President's Brunch



## Men's Soccer Game

**4:58**  
PM



# Alumni Bits

## '00s

**Kelsey (Davelaar, '09)** and **Jonathan Schmidt ('09)** welcomed Kambrie Grace on May 30, 2014. The family lives in Chandler, Minnesota.

▣ **Jason Hilbelink ('09)** received the Distinguished New Teacher Award from the Tennessee Education Association in the Middle School Category. The award recognizes a teacher in the first five years of teaching who has gone above and beyond for students.



## '10s

▣ **Karina (Bakker, '10)** and **Brian Wierenga ('10)** welcomed Derek William, born February 25, 2014. He joins his sister Miya.



**Beth (Tinklenberg, '11)** and **Derek Raebel ('09)**, married on July 13, 2014, live in Prior Lake, Minnesota.

**Elise (Van Essen, '11)** and **Tyler Dooyema ('11)** welcomed Raegan Marie on July 8, 2014, in Sioux Center, Iowa.

**Dana (Hanenburg, '11)** and **Daniel Shuff** were married on July 26, 2014. They live in Beaverton, Oregon.

**Rachel (Werkhoven, '11)** and **Jon Van Nieuwenhuyzen ('11)** welcomed Anna Jean on September 26, 2014, in Monroe, Washington.

**Josh ('11)** and **Erin (Mulder, '11)** **Wynia** welcomed Grace Evelyn on August 4, 2014.

**Heather (Enerson, '12)** and **Peter Hamstra ('11)** of La Crosse, Wisconsin, welcomed Elaine Ann on January 21, 2014.

**Daniel ('13)** and **Leah (Hanenburg, '11)** **Hofland** welcomed Lydia Faye on June 18, 2014.



# SATURDAY

## OCTOBER 18



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